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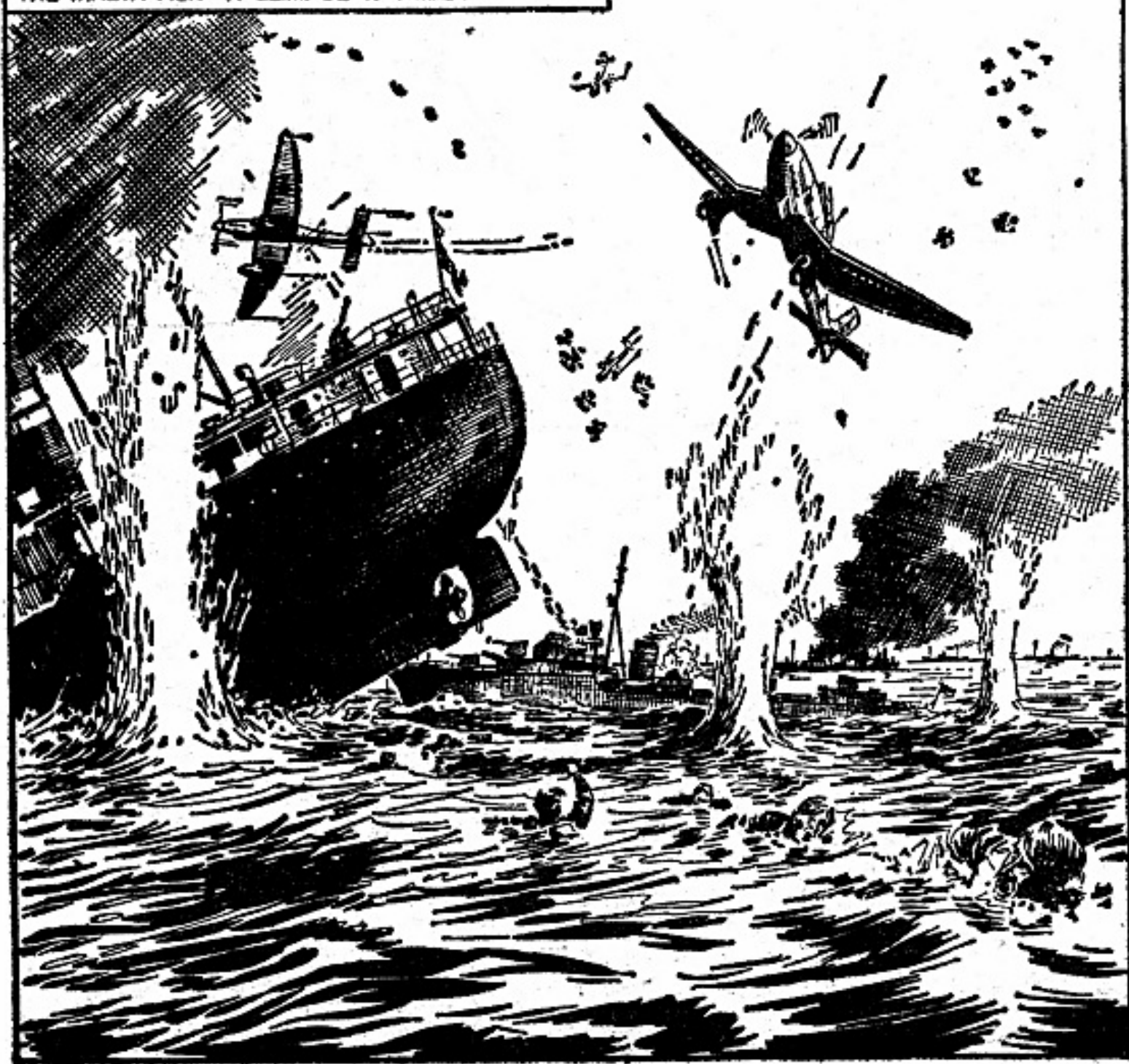
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Lot No. P.27

TEETH OF THE SHARK

IN THEIR GALLANT ATTEMPTS TO CARRY VITAL FOOD AND AMMUNITION SUPPLIES TO WAR-ENCIRCLED MALTA, ROYAL NAVY MEN AND MERCHANT SEAMEN FOUND THEMSELVES COMRADES-IN-ARMS FOR THEIR CONVOYS RAN A MERCILESS GAUNTLET OF GERMAN BOMBS. THOSE WHO SURVIVED CALLED THE MALTA RUN "A GLIMPSE OF HELL..."



Chapter 1. New Command

IT TAKES ALL KINDS OF MEN TO FIGHT A WAR. THE BRAVE, THE STRONG, THE FRIGHTENED, THE HONEST, THE AMBITIOUS. THERE WAS LITTLE DOUBT INTO WHICH CATEGORY HENRY JACKSON SHARP FITTED.

YOUR PAPERS, SIR. MAY I OFFER MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION...

HAA! THANK YOU, JENKINS. IT HAS NOT COME BEFORE TIME, HIND YOU. SHOULD HAVE HAD A COMMAND YEARS AGO BUT FOR THOSE SHORTSIGHTED FOOLS UP AT ADMIRALTY!

COMMANDER SHARP BRACED HIMSELF AT HIS DESK AS IF HE WERE ON THE BRIDGE OF THE SHIPS HE HAD NEVER COMMANDED.

SEND A SIGNAL TO PORTSMOUTH, JENKINS. TELL 'EM WHEN TO EXPECT ME. I SHALL WANT A FULL SCALE INSPECTION, WITH A PARADE LAID ON, AS WELL.

AYE AYE, SIR!

THE ANTICIPATORY GLEAM IN THE WATERY EYES OF HENRY JACKSON SHARP BODED ILL FOR THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF HIS NEW COMMAND.

THAT'LL SET THE CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS. AND THAT'S ONLY A BEGINNING...

ONE OF THE SUBMARINES OF SHARP'S NEW COMMAND WAS AT THAT MOMENT NEARING HER BASE.

WELL, TOM, IT'S A DESK JOB FROM NOW ON FOR ME. THE SURGEON COMMANDER RECKONS I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS SORT OF LIFE.

THE OLD TUB WON'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT YOU ON BOARD, SKIPPER...

Teeth Of The Shark

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER HAWKE GAVE A WRY SMILE AND LOOKED KEENLY AT HIS YOUNG FIRST LIEUTENANT.

I'VE RECOMMENDED YOU FOR COMMAND, TOM. SHE'LL BE IN YOUR HANDS FROM NOW ON.

TOM STOREY BEGAN TO STAMMER HIS THANKS BUT THE OLDER MAN SILENCED HIM GRUFFLY.

I'VE ARRANGED A TRAINING EXERCISE FOR FIRST LIGHT, TOMORROW. THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS TO BE BRUSHED UP BEFORE THE NEW C.O. ARRIVES.

BUT YOU'RE LEAVING US TONIGHT, SIR...



MOORING LINES WERE SNAKING BETWEEN SUBMARINE AND QUAYSIDE NOW. LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER HAWKE'S LAST VOYAGE WAS OVER.



THE FOLLOWING MORNING AT FIRST LIGHT, TOM STOREY PROUDLY CONNED H.M. SUBMARINE TUDOR FROM HER MOORINGS AND HEADED HER FOR THE OPEN SEA. IT WAS A SAD MAN WHO STOOD ON THE JETTY, WATCHING HER GO...



THERE FOLLOWED A HARD DAY'S TRAINING FOR THE CREW WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF AN OPERATIONAL SUBMARINE'S ACTIVITIES BEING TESTED TO THE FULL.

NOT BAD,
LADS. A BIT SLOW
THERE, NUMBER
TWO!

A GOOD
PLOT, NAV. WE'RE
BANG ON TARGET.
OKAY, CHIEF—TAKE
HER UP!

DIVE! DIVE!
DIVE!



IT WAS A VERY TIRED CREW THAT TOM BROUGHT BACK TO BASE THAT EVENING. BUT EVEN AS THEY TIED UP, THEY WERE RUDELY WELCOMED BY THE STENTORIAN VOICE OF COMMANDER SHARP.

NICE OF YOU TO CALL ON US, *MISTER* STOREY! STAND DOWN YOUR CREW AND REPORT TO MY OFFICE *AT ONCE!*



THE INCENSED C.O. STOMPED OFF ALONG THE JETTY TOWARDS HIS OFFICE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SQUARE, LEAVING A PUZZLED AND APPREHENSIVE YOUNG LIEUTENANT STARING AFTER HIM.

BLOW ME DOWN! THAT MUST BE THE NEW C.O.! SOUNDS AS IF I'M FOR THE HIGH JUMP...



WHEN HE REPORTED TO THE COMMANDER'S OFFICE, TOM CAME IN FOR THE FULL BLAST OF HIS COMMANDING OFFICER'S DISAPPROVAL.



NOW THEN, YOUNG MAN.
I ARRIVE ON THIS STATION,
FIND YOU AND YOUR SHIP HAVE
PUT TO SEA. NO-ONE KNOWS
WHERE THE DEVIL YOU ARE.
YOU'VE GOT SOME EXPLAINING
TO DO, BY HEAVENS!

BUT, SIR, WE'VE BEEN OUT
ON AN EXERCISE. WE LEFT BEFORE
DAWN. WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE
ARRIVING TODAY...

COMMANDER SHARP SNORTED ANGRILY...



YOU DIDN'T KNOW? YOU SHOULD
HAVE MADE IT YOUR BUSINESS TO KNOW.
I WILL NOT TOLERATE SUCH SLACKNESS.
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE BEEN
RECOMMENDED FOR COMMAND...

Y-YES, SIR.
LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER
HAWKE DID...

ONCE MORE, TOM STOREY WAS RUDELY SILENCED.

VERY WELL, LIEUTENANT STOREY, YOU SHALL HAVE THE COMMAND YOU DESERVE. *H.M.S. SHARK*—SHE'S LYING AT INVERGORDON. YOU WILL LEAVE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING...

AYE AYE, SIR—
ER—THANK YOU, SIR.

TOO RELIEVED TO COME OUT OF THAT STORMY INTERVIEW WITH A COMMAND AFTER ALL, TOM DID NOT THINK TO WONDER AT HIS C.O.'S SEEMING CHANGE OF HEART.

PITY IT'S NOT IN THE *TUDOR* STILL, BUT *SHARK* IS THE RIGHT NAME FOR A FIGHTING SUB, BY GOLLY!

NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, IN THE LOCKED COMPARTMENT OF A NORTH-BOUND TRAIN, TOM TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS SOLITUDE TO READ THE SECRET PAPERS...

SHE'S NOT A FIGHTING SUB, AFTER ALL! JUST AN OLD TRAINING-BOAT—NO ARMAMENT EXCEPT THE THREE POINT SEVEN FORWARD—TORPEDO TUBES SEALED OFF! WE'RE TO CARRY SUPPLIES TO OPERATIONAL SUBS! OH, NO!

DIG FOR
VICTORY

WORSE WAS TO COME...

In accordance with this policy H.M.S. SHARK will be based on Malta and will be used to ferry stores and ammunition to operational craft on patrol. SHARK will remain at the greatest possible depth... surfacing only to transfer her cargo when a rendezvous is effected.

To avoid any breach of security, Their Lordships have indicated that SHARK should carry a normal submarine's complement of Torpedomen, Gunnery Rates and so on. But these Ratings need not have reached a high standard of proficiency.

AT INVERGORDON, TOM STOREY GOT HIS FIRST GLIMPSE OF H.M.S. SHARK. IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE SCRUFFIEST BOAT IN THE SUBMARINE SERVICE!



BEFORE HE HAD EVEN STEPPED ABOARD, TOM RAN UP AGAINST ONE OF HIS MAKESHIFT CREW...



TOM'S MEETING WITH THE FIRST OF HIS OFFICERS WAS JUST AS UNPLEASANT. THE DUTY OFFICER WAS SUB-LIEUTENANT SANDY BAIRD....



Teeth Of The Shark

TOM WISELY DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE GREATEST SAILOR OF ALL TIMES, HORATIO NELSON. HE TURNED A BLIND EYE...



YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY BE THE DUTY OFFICER, AS YOU HAVE OBVIOUSLY BEEN SLEEPING... AND NAVAL OFFICERS ARE *NEVER* ASLEEP ON DUTY. GET BELOW. I'LL SEE THE *REAL* DUTY OFFICER WHEN HE COMES OFF WATCH TOMORROW-MORNING!

TOM WON THE UNDYING RESPECT AND ADMIRATION OF A MUCH-CHASTENED SANDY THE NEXT DAY, WHEN HE CONTINUED THE PRETENCE OF THE NIGHT BEFORE—BUT WITH AN UNMISTAKABLE NOTE OF WARNING IN HIS VOICE.



WHEN I ARRIVED ON BOARD LAST NIGHT, SOME LOUT TRIED TO PASS HIMSELF OFF AS THE DUTY OFFICER! FORTUNATELY FOR HIM, IT WAS TOO DARK FOR ME TO SEE HIS FACE. I LOOK TO YOU TO SEE THAT THIS DOES NOT OCCUR AGAIN.

AYE AYE, SIR. I'LL—ER—ATTEND TO IT! IT'LL NO' HAPPEN AGAIN, SIR.

FIVE MINUTES LATER, TOM SAW HIS NEW SHIP'S COMPANY FOR THE FIRST TIME. THEY WERE, AS HIS OLD TRAINING SCHOOL C.P.O.s USED TO SAY, "ORRIBLE!"

SHIP'S COMPANY MUSTERED READY FOR YOUR INSPECTION, SIR.

THANK YOU, DUTY OFFICER... CARRY ON, PLEASE.

A CLOSER VIEW OF THE SHIFTLESS BUNCH DECIDED TOM THAT THIS WAS THE TIME TO GET TOUGH!

YOUR TURN-OUT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH—NOT BY A LONG WAY! THE SHIP'S COMPANY WILL NOW BE DISMISSED AND WILL FALL IN AGAIN IN THIRTY MINUTES' TIME, LOOKING SOMETHING LIKE A SHIP'S COMPANY! CARRY ON, CHIEF!

WALKING ALONG THE JETTY, TOM QUESTIONED SANDY ABOUT SUB-LIEUTENANT WILSON, WHOSE ABSENCE FROM PARADE HE HAD NOTICED.

RIGHT, ENGINES, I'M AFRAID THAT I SPOTTED THE ABSENCE OF OUR NAVIGATING OFFICER. I'LL WAGER THAT YOU'VE NO MORE IDEA WHERE HE IS THAN I HAVE.

YOU SEE, HE LIVES ASHORE, SIR, AND...

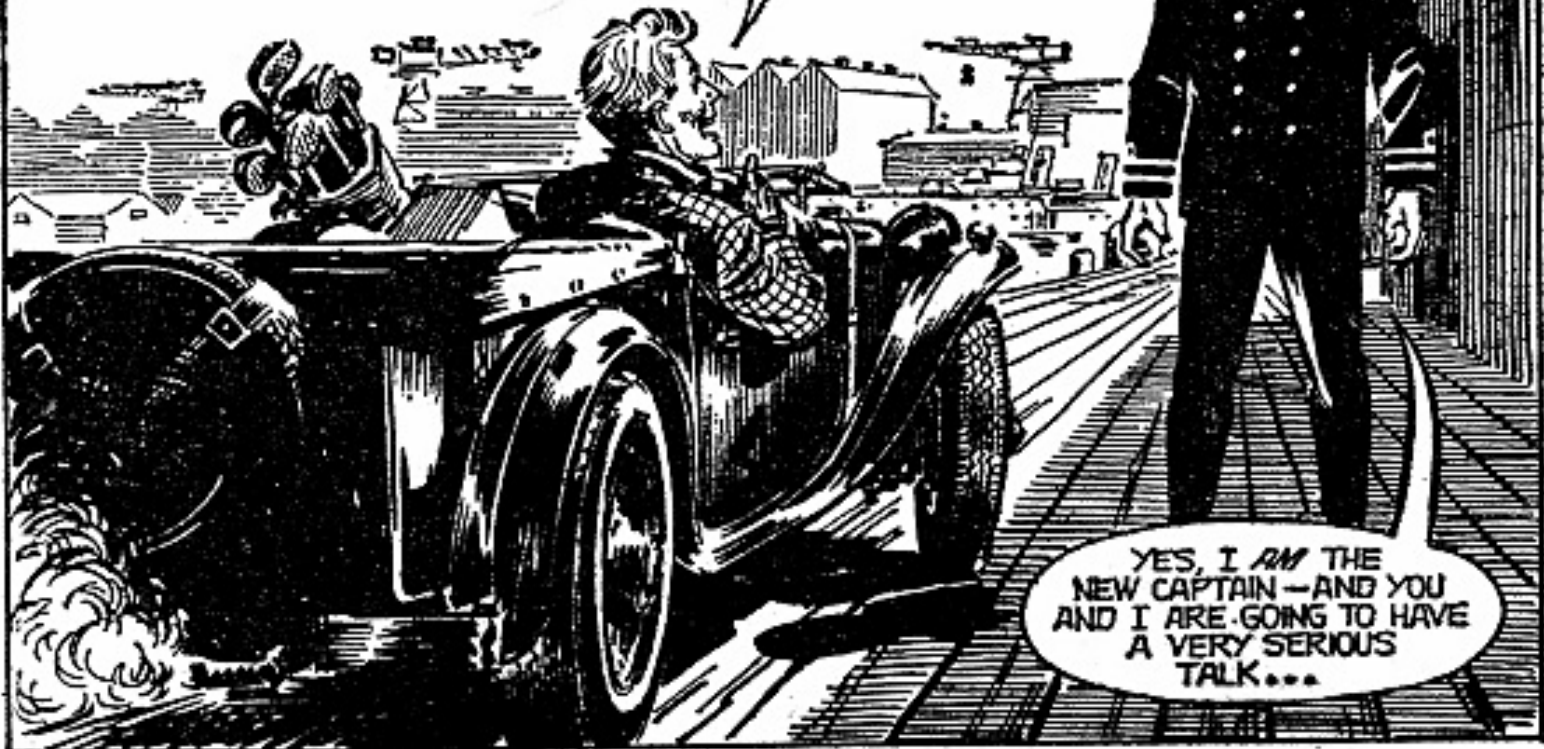
AS IF TO SAVE SANDY ANY FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT, THE MISSING NAVIGATOR CHOSE THAT VERY MOMENT TO TURN UP...

NEVER MIND! UNLESS I'M VERY MUCH MISTAKEN, HERE IS THE GENTLEMAN NOW! YOU CUT ALONG AND SEE TO THE PARADE. I'LL DEAL WITH THIS!

AYE AYE, SKIPPER.

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, REGGIE WILSON SEEMED TO HAVE SOME STRANGE IDEAS ABOUT THE RESPECT DUE TO SENIOR OFFICERS.

I SAY, OLD FRUIT, ARE YOU THE NEW SKIPPER? PLEASED TO MEET YOU AND ALL THAT! HANG ON, I'LL JUST PARK THE OLD TIN-LIZZIE!



YES, I AM THE NEW CAPTAIN—AND YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE A VERY SERIOUS TALK...



YOU CAN TURN YOUR TIN-LIZZIE AROUND AND DRIVE IT BACK TO WHEREVER YOU'VE BEEN HANGING OUT WHILE THE REST OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY HAVE ROUGHED IT ON BOARD. REPORT TO ME THE INSTANT YOU GET BACK! SELL THOSE GOLF-CLUBS WHILE YOU'RE AT IT—YOU WON'T NEED THEM WHERE YOU'RE GOING!

AS HE WATCHED REGGIE HASTILY DRIVE OFF, TOM REALISED JUST HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS GOING TO BE, LICKING HIS SHAKY CREW INTO SHAPE.



WHAT A SHAMBLES! OLD SHARP MUST HAVE KNOWN WHAT HE WAS LETTING ME IN FOR. WILL I EVER GET SHARK OUT OF HARBOUR — LET ALONE REACH MALTA?

FOR THE NEXT WEEKS, WHILE DOCKYARD WORKERS FINISHED THE JOB OF TURNING *H.M.S. SHARK* INTO AN UNDERWATER TRAMP STEAMER, TOM DROVE HIS CREW UNMERCIFULLY, JUST WHEN THINGS WERE BEGINNING TO GO WELL, HE FOUND ANOTHER CRISIS ON HIS HANDS.



YES — WHAT IS IT, NAV?

CAN YOU COME TO THE CONTROL ROOM, SIR? IT'S CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GRIMSHAW — I THINK THE OLD BOY IS OFF HIS CHUMP!

HE FOUND THE CHIEF TREMBLING AS IF IN A FEVER, HIS VOICE RAMBLING DELIRIOUSLY.



... I CAN'T HELP YOU MATES — I CAN'T HELP YOU! WE'RE GOING DOWN ...

ALL RIGHT, NAV, I'LL ATTEND TO THIS. OFF YOU GO. NO NEED TO BROADCAST IT — OKAY?

AYE AYE, SKIPPER — MUM'S THE WORD!

C.P.O. GRIMSHAW WAS OBVIOUSLY IN A BAD WAY, SO TOM TOOK HIM BACK TO HIS OWN CABIN AND TRIED TO MAKE HIM TALK.



COME ON, CHIEF—
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
GET IT OFF YOUR MIND
AND YOU'LL FEEL BETTER,
I'M SURE.

BUT THE OLD CHIEF WOULD NOT CONFIDE IN TOM—
NOT YET!



I'M ALL RIGHT
NOW, SIR. THANKS,
BUT—THERE'S NOTHING
YOU CAN DO—NOTHING
ANYONE CAN DO! I'LL
GET ALONG NOW,
SIR.

VERY WELL,
CHIEF—IF YOU'RE SURE
YOU CAN MANAGE. COME
AND SEE ME ANY TIME!

THE C.P.O. HAD SCARCELY LEFT WHEN *H.M.S. SHARK'S*
SAILING ORDERS ARRIVED...

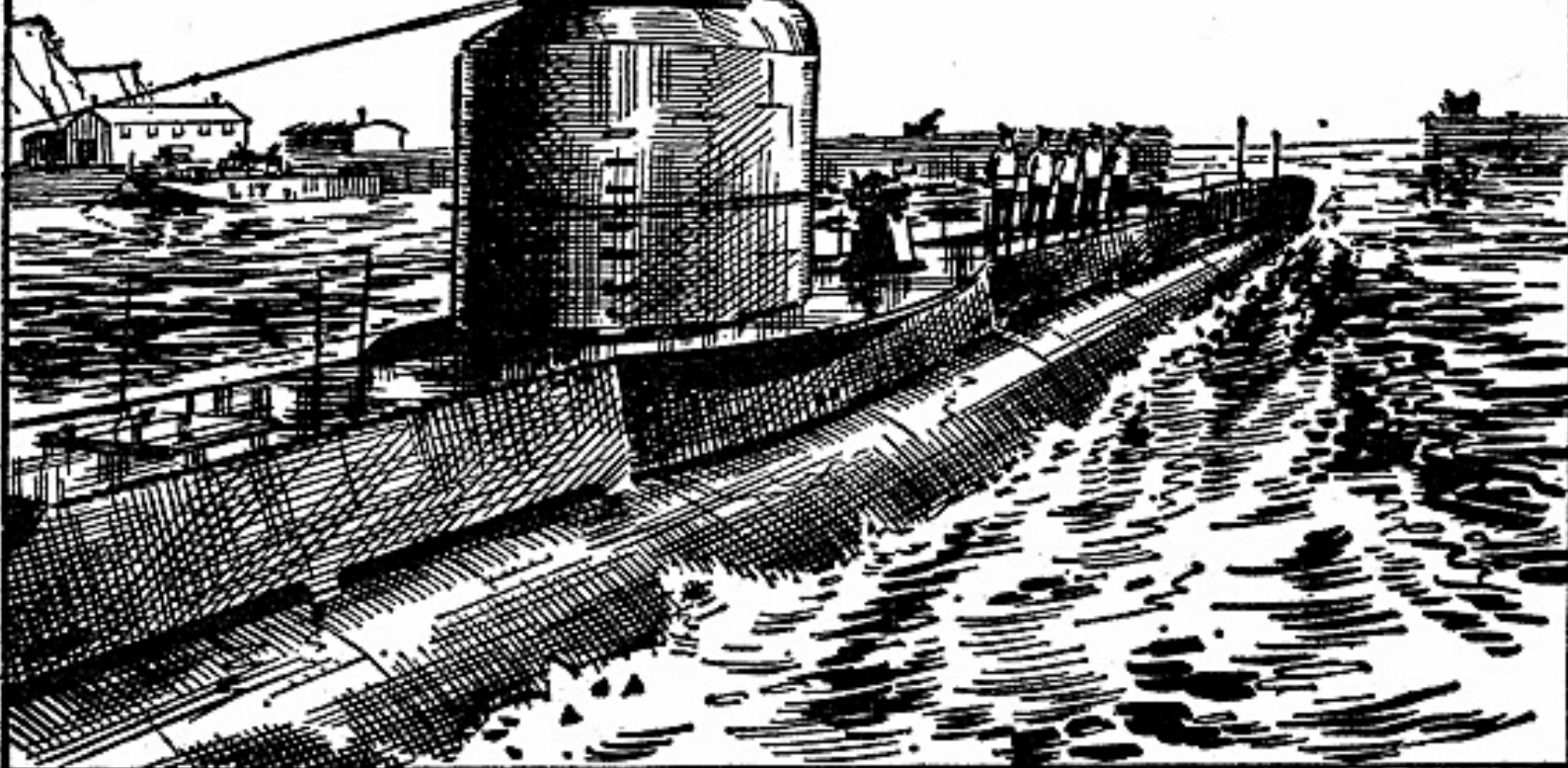


SIGNAL FROM
ADMIRALTY, SIR. 'SHARK'
WILL SLIP AND PROCEED TO
RENDEZVOUS WITH CONVOY
P.Z. EIGHTY-ONE, O-SEVEN-
FOUR-FIVE HOURS, TOMORROW.
ANY REPLY, SIR?

NO, SPARKS.
JUST ACKNOWLEDGE,
IF YOU PLEASE.

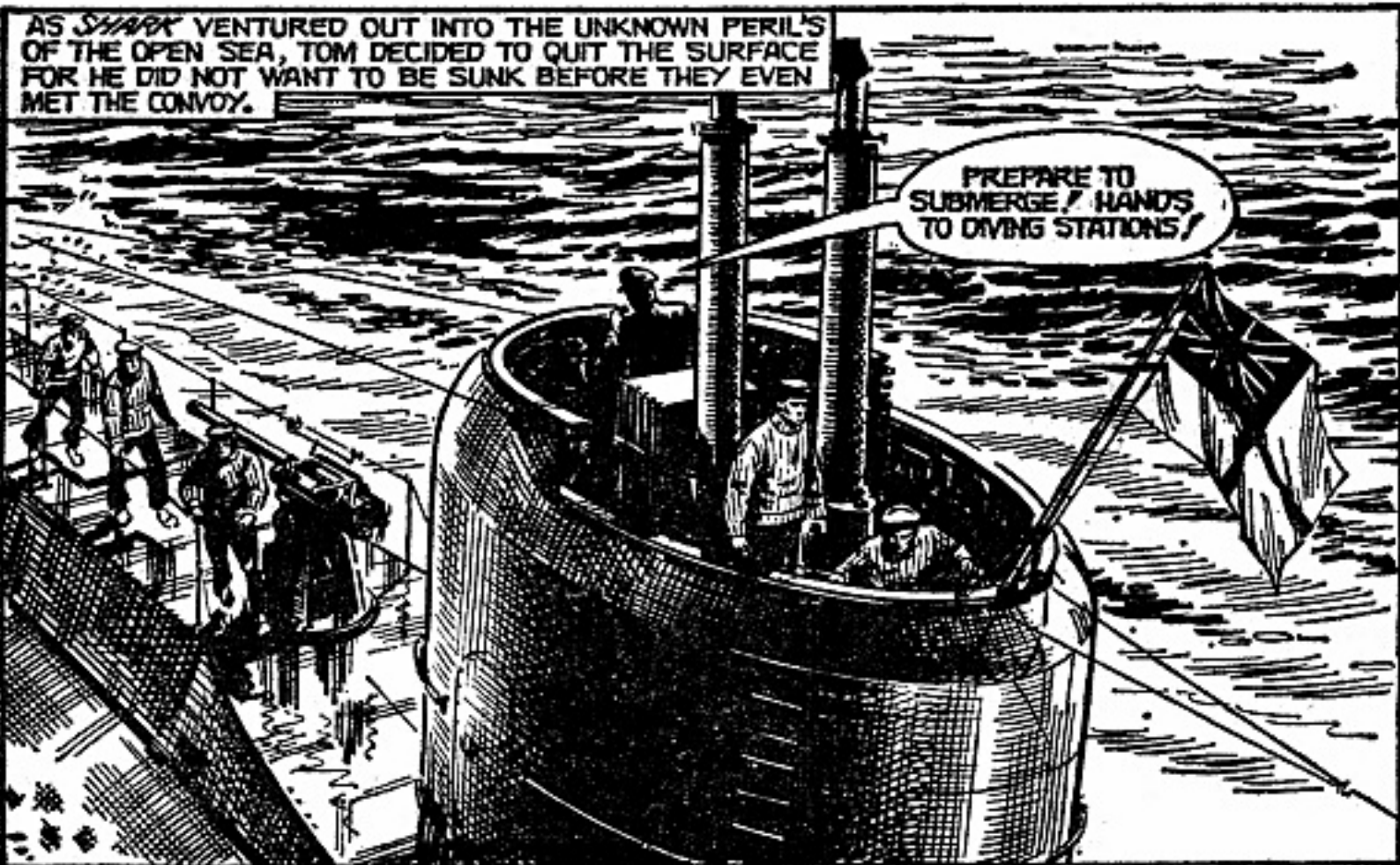
CONNING THE AGED SUBMARINE OUT OF HARBOUR, TOM KNEW THAT THE FULL EXTENT OF COMMANDER SHARP'S SPIRE LAY AHEAD OF HIM.

GROUP UP —
HALF AHEAD BOTH —
MIDSHIPS.



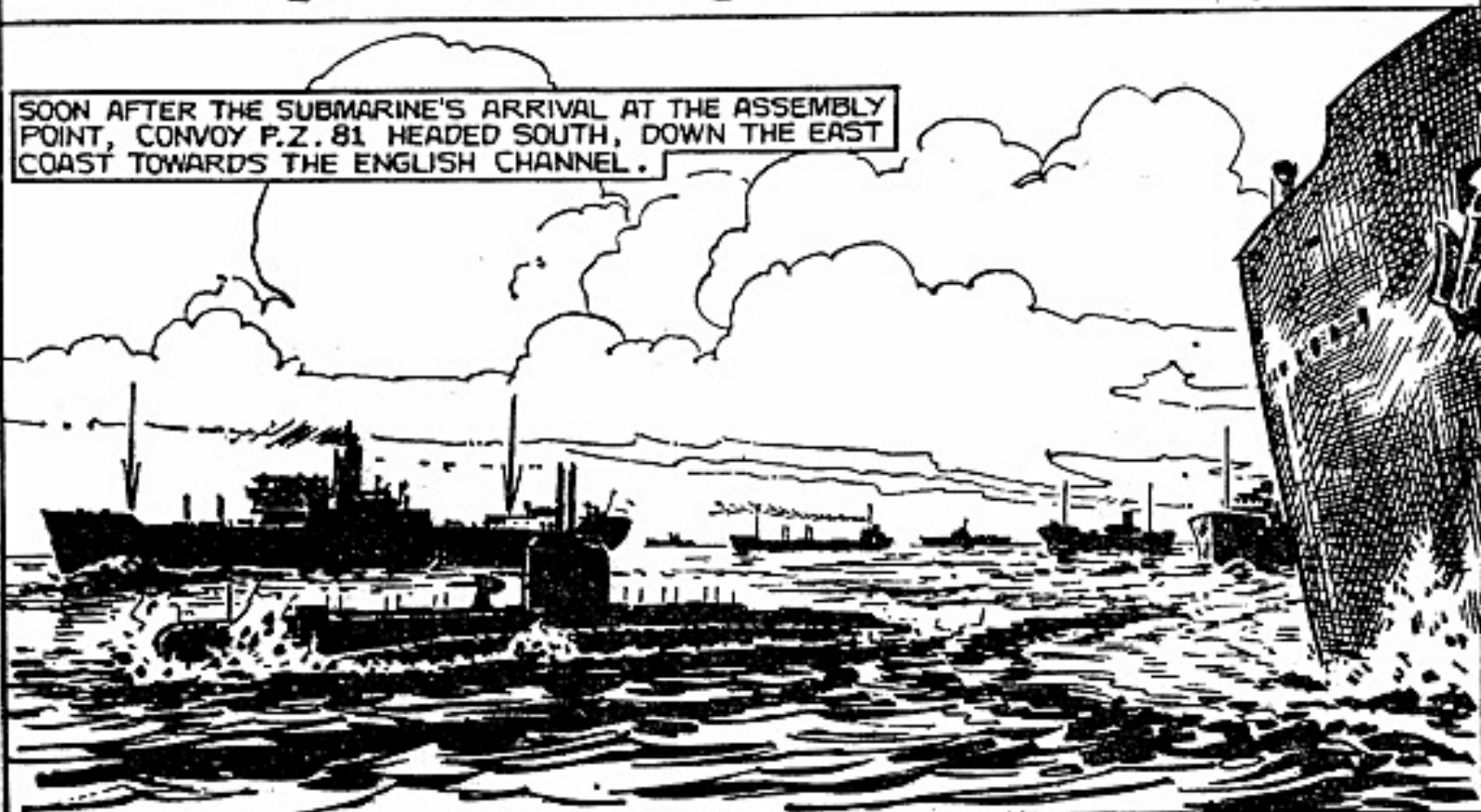
AS *SHARK* VENTURED OUT INTO THE UNKNOWN PERIL'S OF THE OPEN SEA, TOM DECIDED TO QUIT THE SURFACE FOR HE DID NOT WANT TO BE SUNK BEFORE THEY EVEN MET THE CONVOY.

PREPARE TO
SUBMERGE! HANDS
TO DIVING STATIONS!



Chapter 2. *Dangerous Passage*

SOON AFTER THE SUBMARINE'S ARRIVAL AT THE ASSEMBLY POINT, CONVOY P.Z. 81 HEADED SOUTH, DOWN THE EAST COAST TOWARDS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL.



THEY FLOODED ALONG AT A MERE FIVE OR SIX KNOTS, THE SPEED SET BY THE SLOWEST OLD TRAMP STEAMER...

IF WE REDUCE SPEED ANY FURTHER, PILOT, WE'LL BE PINCHED FOR PARKING. TAKE OVER THE WATCH, WILL YOU? I'D LIKE TO HAVE A WALK ROUND BELOW DECKS...



AYE AYE, SKIPPER.

DOWN IN THE CONTROL ROOM - TOM'S FIRST CALL - HE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND AN ABLE SEAMAN ON THE WHEEL...



HELLO - THOMPSON, ISN'T IT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THE WHEEL?

I'M RELIEVING THE COX'N, SIR. HE'S A BIT OFF-COLOUR. GONE TO LIE DOWN IN HIS CABIN.

WHEN HE HAD FINISHED HIS TOUR, TOM
FETCHED THE OLD CHIEF UP ON DECK
ON THE PRETENCE OF INSPECTING
SHARK'S AFTER CASING.

SHE SEEMS TO BE SEAWORTHY ENOUGH,
CHIEF. I NOTICED THAT THOMPSON WAS TAKING
YOUR TRICK ON THE WHEEL. IS THERE ANYTHING
I CAN DO? WHY DON'T YOU GET IT OFF
YOUR CHEST?

W-WELL,
SIR...



SLOWLY, RELUCTANTLY, AT FIRST, THEN IN A SPATE
OF WORDS, GRIMSHAW TOLD TOM THE WHOLE STORY
OF HIS SHAME—OF HIS TWO SUB DISASTERS AND
HIS LOST NERVE.

...SO THAT'S HOW
IT IS, SIR. TWICE MY
SUBS'VE GONE DOWN—
AND MOST OF THE LADS
WITH THEM. IT'S
'ORRIBLE, SIR! THE
THIRD TIME...

NO REASON WHY THERE
SHOULD BE A THIRD TIME,
CHIEF—IF WE ALL DO OUR
JOBS PROPERLY...



SUDDENLY TOM'S WORDS WERE INTERRUPTED BY
A HAIL FROM THE CONNING TOWER...

SIGNAL FROM
THE FLAGSHIP, SIR—
AIRCRAFT WARNING
RED!

RIGHT, ROGERS. ASK
MISTER WILSON TO BRING
THE HANDS TO ACTION
STATIONS! CHIEF—GET
ON THAT WHEEL AND KEEP
US OUT OF TROUBLE,
WILL YOU?

AYE AYE,
SIR! I'LL DO
MY BEST!

BY THE TIME TOM GAINED THE CONNING PLATFORM,
THE FIRST ENEMY AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN SIGHTED.

WHAT
ARE THEY
SKIPPER?

HARD TO TELL AT THIS RANGE,
NAV. PROBABLY CONDORS FROM ONE
OF THE COASTAL AIRSTRIPS IN NORWAY.
ANYWAY, WE'LL SOON KNOW...

Teeth Of The Shark

BOMBS BEGAN TO GEYSER INTO THE SEA AROUND THE MERCHANT SHIPS—AND CLOSE TO SHARK'S SLEEK STEEL SIDES, TOO.

HARD-A-PORT—
GROUP UP—FULL
AHEAD, BOTH
ENGINES!

FOR PETE'S SAKE,
GET THAT GUN INTO
ACTION!



THE OLD SUB STARTED TO TURN—BUT FAR TOO SLOWLY. ONE STICK OF BOMBS NEARLY HAD HER.



CHIEF!
YOU'LL HAVE TO BE
QUICKER THAN THAT.
WE'RE RELYING ON
YOU!

THE LAST THING CHIEFY WANTED WAS TO CATCH ANOTHER PACKET. FRANTICALLY HE SPUN THE WHEEL. PERHAPS THOSE FEW WORDS OF TRUST AND RELIANCE PUT THE OLD COX'N ON HIS METTLE AND BANISHED THE NAGGING FEARS FOR THE MOMENT.



COME ON,
YOU UGLY GREAT
SARDINE—GET
ROUND!

THE NEXT EVASIVE TURN WAS SHEER
COPY-BOOK STUFF.

THAT'S FINE!
WE MIGHT COME OUT
OF THIS ALIVE—
YET!

THE MAN'S A
MAGICIAN! A FEW
MAGIC WORDS AND CHIEFY
TURNS THE OLD TUB
ON A TANNER!

AT LAST, THE GUN'S CREW OPENED FIRE—
BUT MUCH TOO LATE, FOR THE BOMBERS
WERE ALREADY MAKING OFF. A FLIGHT OF
SPITFIRES HAD ARRIVED.

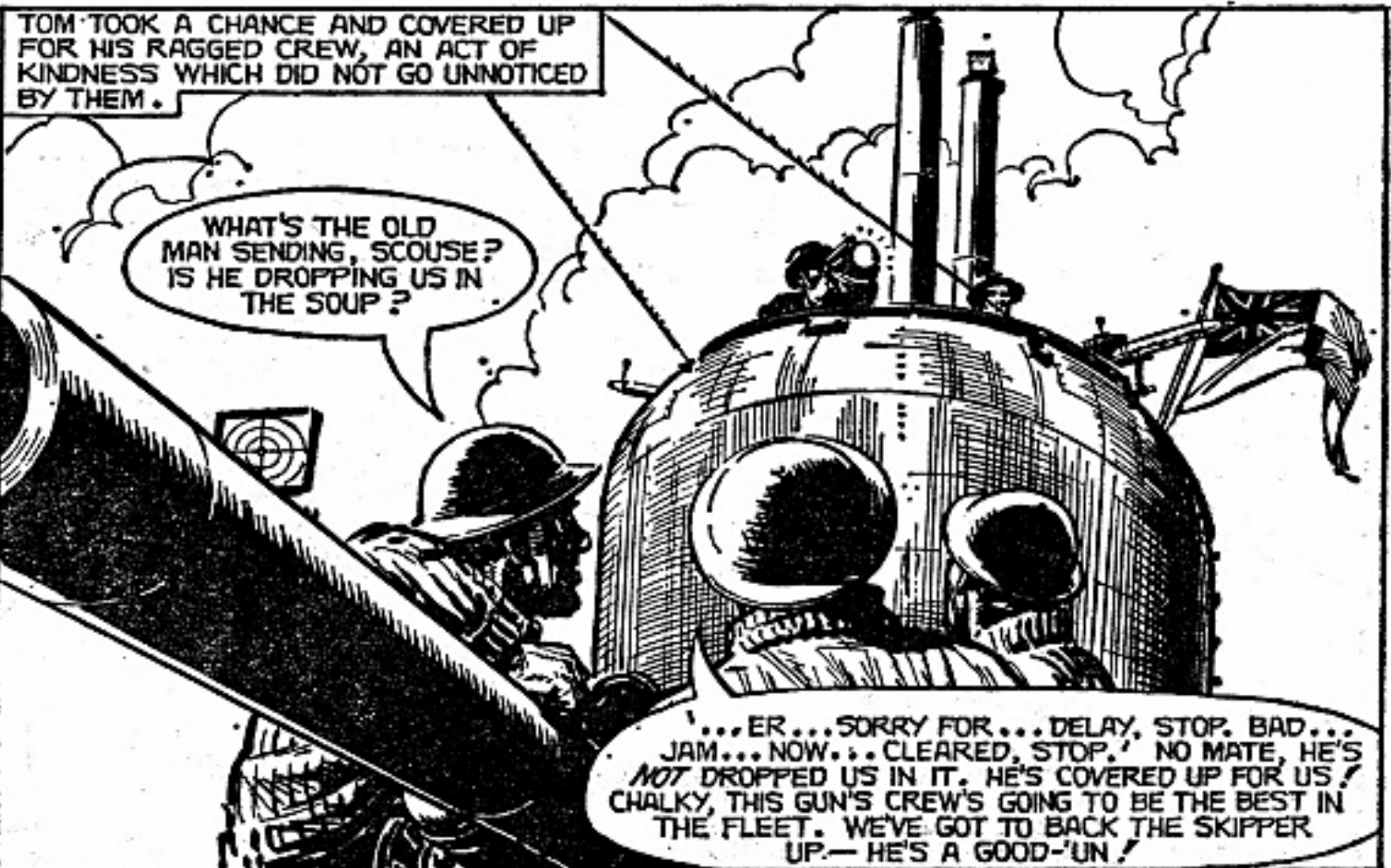
GUN'S CREW—CHECK, CHECK,
CHECK! CEASE FIRING—TRAIN
FORE AND AFT! THE R.A.F. BOYS
DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO BEING
SHOT DOWN BY THE NAVY!

BUT THE SHARK'S TARDY GUNNERY HAD BEEN NOTICED BY THE FLAGSHIP, THE CRUISER, *H.M.S. BANKSHIRE*.



TOM TOOK A CHANCE AND COVERED UP FOR HIS RAGGED CREW, AN ACT OF KINDNESS WHICH DID NOT GO UNNOTICED BY THEM.

WHAT'S THE OLD MAN SENDING, SCOUSE? IS HE DROPPING US IN THE SOUP?



THE *BANKSHIRE*'S CAPTAIN WAS NOT FOOLED. BUT HE KNEW A LITTLE ABOUT THE *SHARK*—AND HER CREW.



'BAD JAM,' EH?
I SHOULD THINK SO! IT'S
THAT SUB'S SKIPPER WHO'S IN
A JAM. HE'LL NEED A LARGE
SLICE OF LUCK BEFORE WE
REACH MALTA!

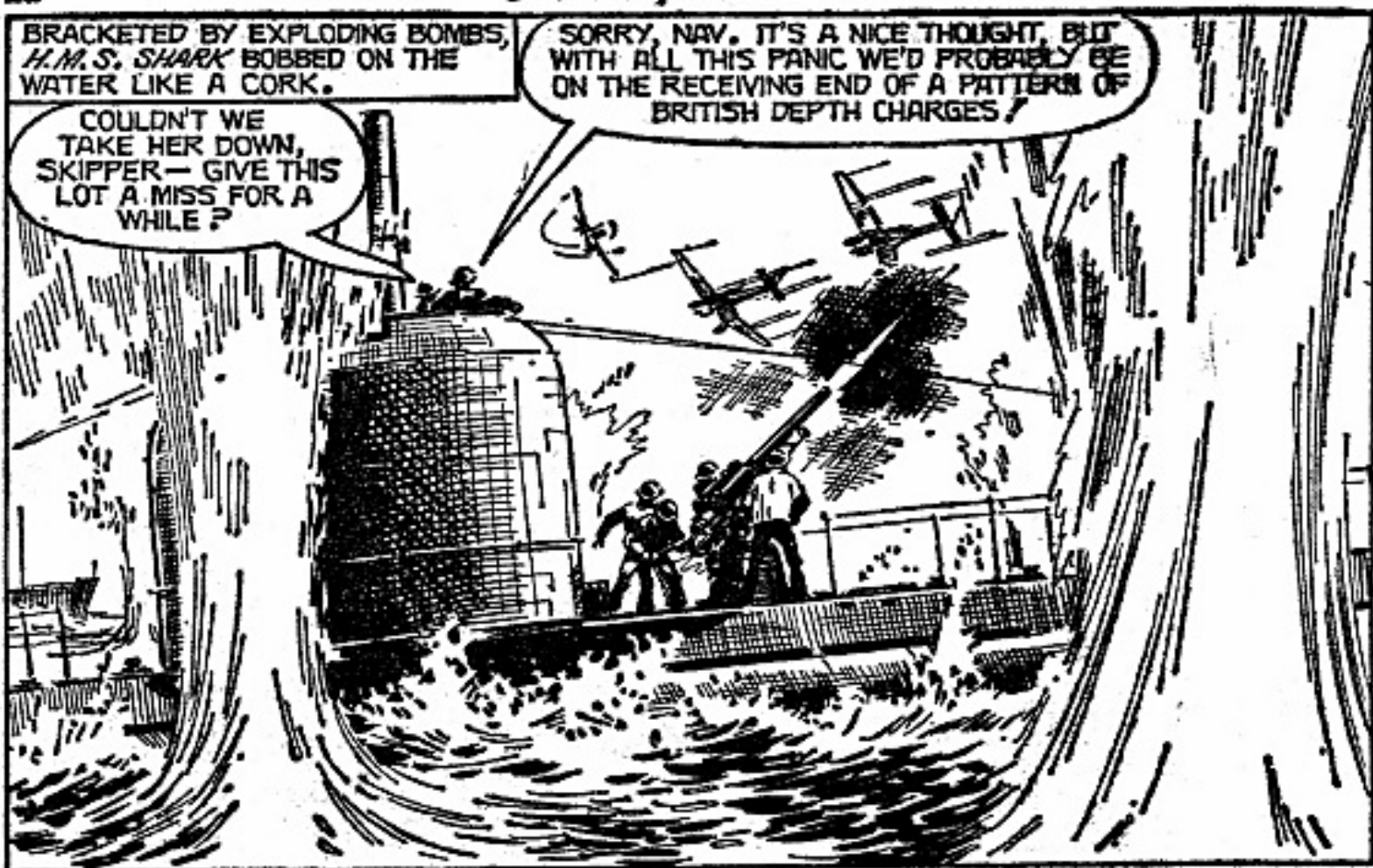
P.Z. 81 WAS HALF-WAY TO GIBRALTAR WHEN THE FIRST OF THE BOMBING RAIDS BEGAN. THE STUKAS PLUMMETED DOWN, SEEMINGLY IMPERVIOUS TO THE CURTAIN OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE THAT DOTTED THE SKY...



BRACKETED BY EXPLODING BOMBS,
H.M.S. SHARK BOBBED ON THE
WATER LIKE A CORK.

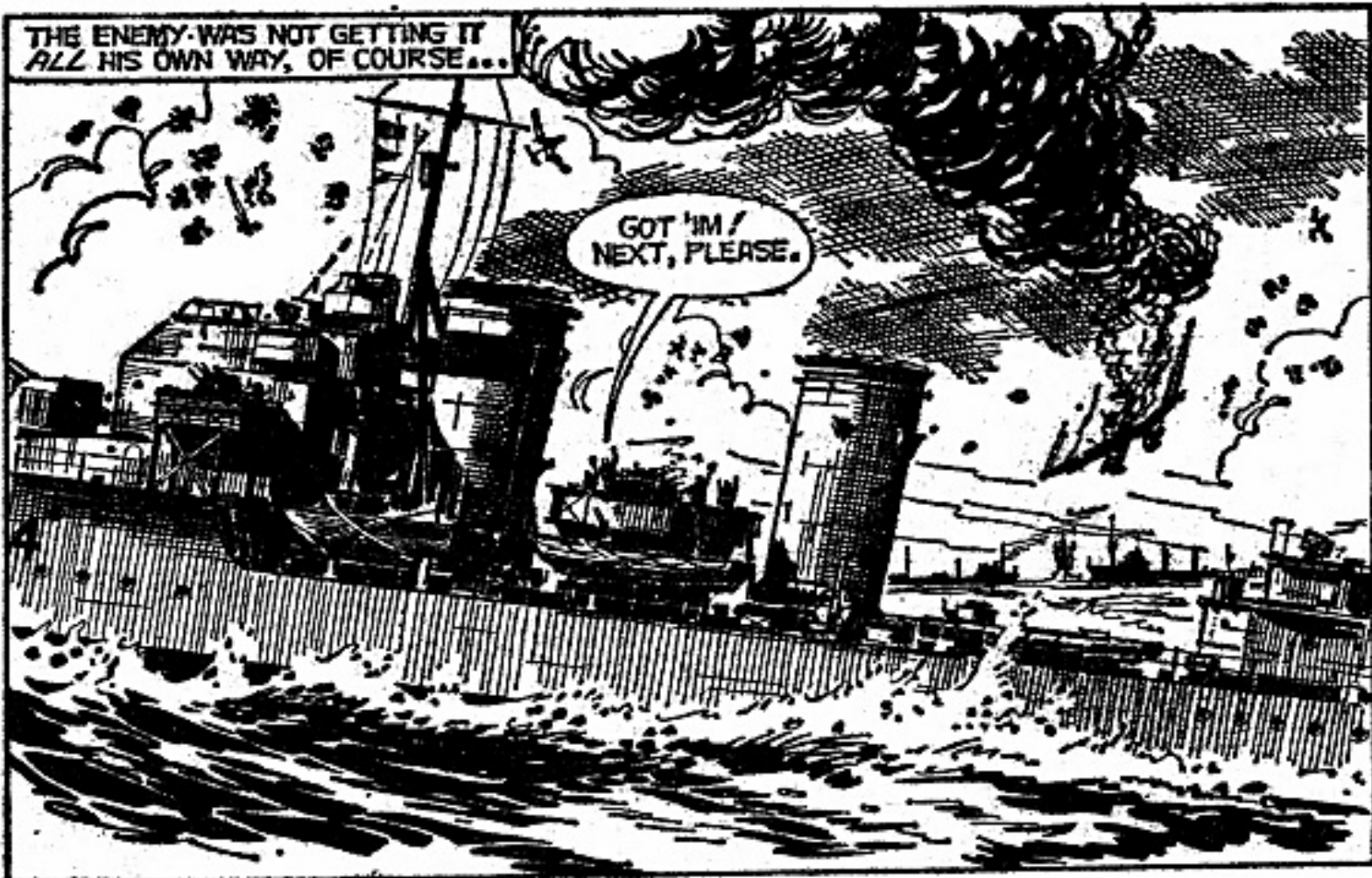
SORRY, NAV. IT'S A NICE THOUGHT, BUT
WITH ALL THIS PANIC WE'D PROBABLY BE
ON THE RECEIVING END OF A PATTERN OF
BRITISH DEPTH CHARGES!

COULDN'T WE
TAKE HER DOWN,
SKIPPER— GIVE THIS
LOT A MISS FOR A
WHILE?

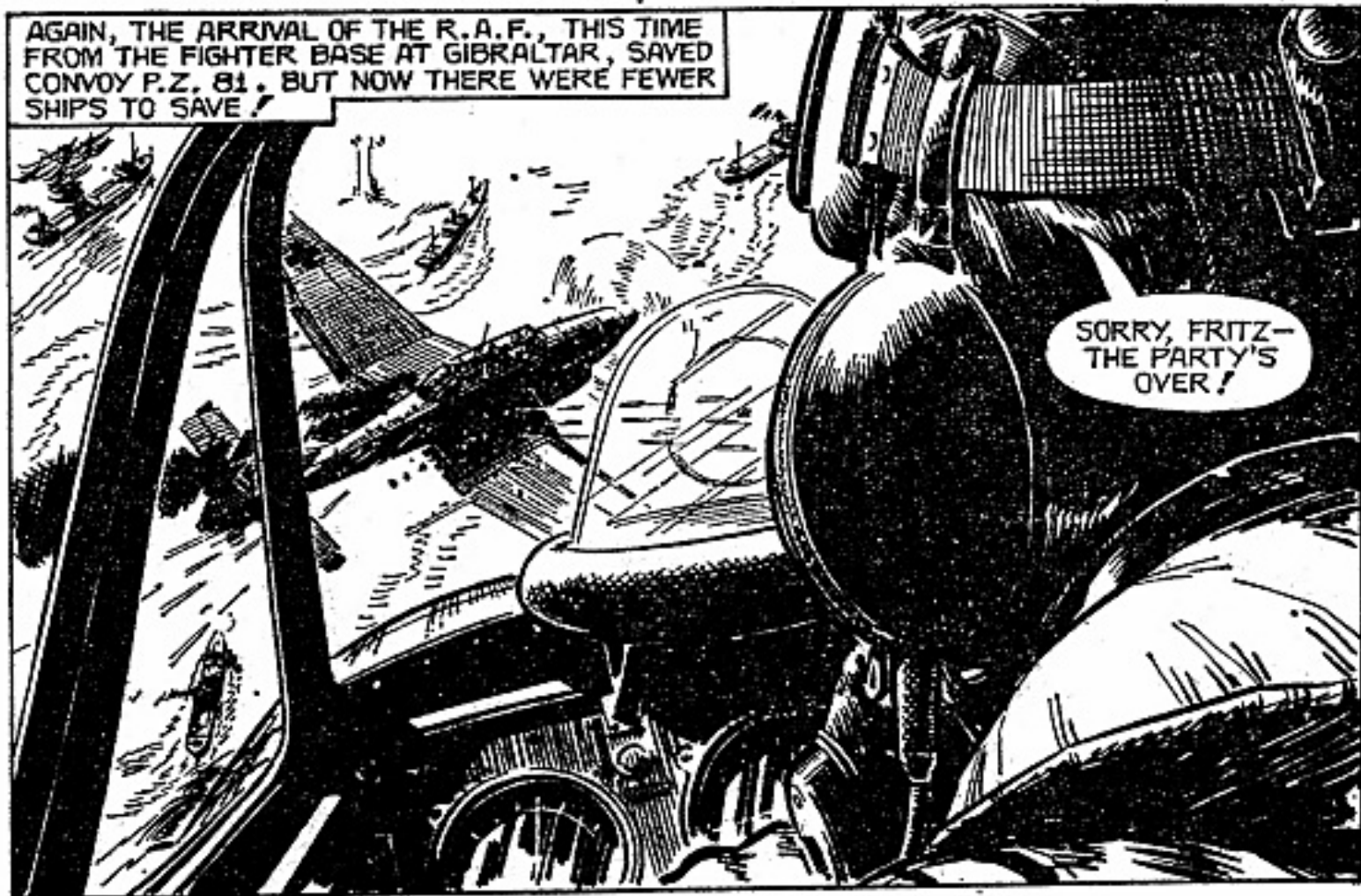


THE ENEMY WAS NOT GETTING IT
ALL HIS OWN WAY, OF COURSE...

GOT 'IM!
NEXT, PLEASE.



AGAIN, THE ARRIVAL OF THE R.A.F., THIS TIME FROM THE FIGHTER BASE AT GIBRALTAR, SAVED CONVOY P.Z. 81. BUT NOW THERE WERE FEWER SHIPS TO SAVE!



GIBRALTAR. PEACE FOR A FEW DAYS, FOR THOSE WHO HAD SURVIVED THIS FAR.

I EXPECT YOU'LL BE DASHING OFF TO SOME RATHER SMART COCKTAIL PARTY AT THE BIGGEST HOTEL, EH, NAV?

WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT, SKIPPER, I'VE ARRANGED TO TAKE CHIEFY AND A FEW OF THE LADS FOR A MEAL. THEY'RE A GOOD BUNCH!



TOM GRINNED WITH PLEASURE AS SUB LIEUTENANT WILSON LEFT THE CONNING PLATFORM...

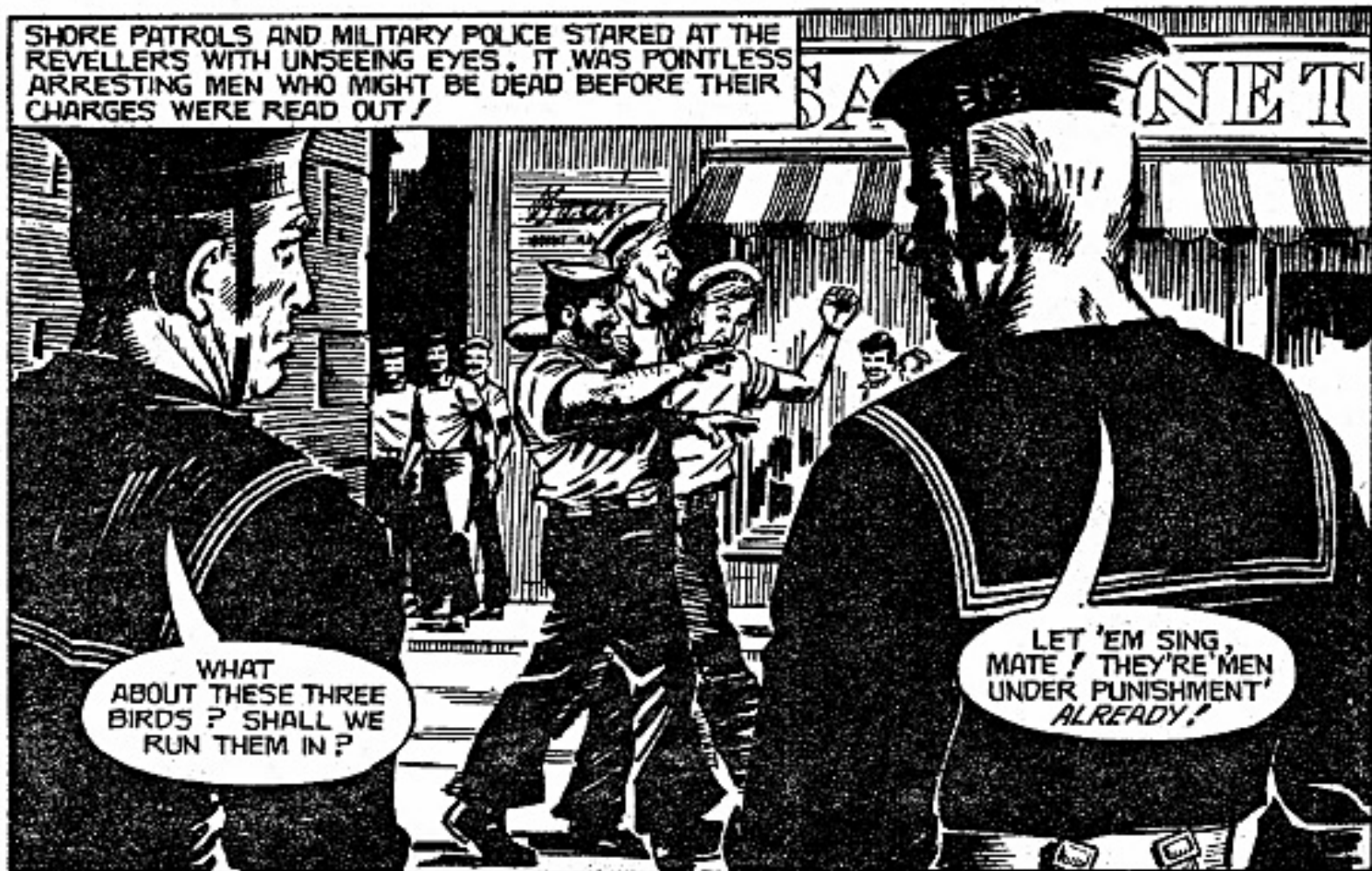
REGGIE, MY LAD, YOU'RE GROWING UP! WELL, I'M GOING TO CATCH UP ON SOME SLEEP.



TO CELEBRATE THEIR BRIEF RESPITE FROM DEATH, THE CREWS OF ALL SHIPS, ROYAL NAVY AND MERCHANT NAVY, SET OUT TO ENJOY THE DELIGHTS OF GIBRALTAR'S MAIN STREET.



SHORE PATROLS AND MILITARY POLICE STARED AT THE REVELLERS WITH UNSEEING EYES. IT WAS POINTLESS ARRESTING MEN WHO MIGHT BE DEAD BEFORE THEIR CHARGES WERE READ OUT!



MOST OF THE SAILORS HAD DONE ENOUGH FIGHTING TO LAST THEM FOR A LONG TIME, BUT TOM MET SOME IN THE DOCKYARD WHO HAD NOT, IT SEEMED...

I'LL TEACH YOU TO CALL *SHARK* A ROTTEN GUNNERY SHIP...
OUCH!

SO SHE IS —
UGH — NOT FIT TO
SAIL WITH A FAST-
FIRING CRUISER LIKE
THE *BANKSHIRE*...
OOPH!



HE RECOGNISED
SOME OF THE MEN
AS MEMBERS OF
HIS CREW...



AH, THOMPSON — IT'S YOU, IS
IT — AND A COUPLE OF YOUR MESS-MATES?
WELL, I'LL NOT HAVE IT SAID THAT MY SHIP'S
COMPANY LACKS MANNERS. TAKE THIS MONEY
AND GO AND BUY YOUR CRUISER CHUMS A
FEW DRINKS... AND APOLOGISE NICELY TO
THEM, YOU UNCOUTH MARINERS!

...ER —
THANK YOU,
SIR! I MEAN —
AYE AYE,
SIR!

TOM'S TACTFUL APPROACH IMPRESSED THE GROUP—
FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE.

COR! YOUR SKIPPER'S A
PROPER GENT! I TAKE BACK ALL
I SAID ABOUT THE SHARK. LET'S
GO—I'D LIKE TO DRINK HIS
HEALTH!

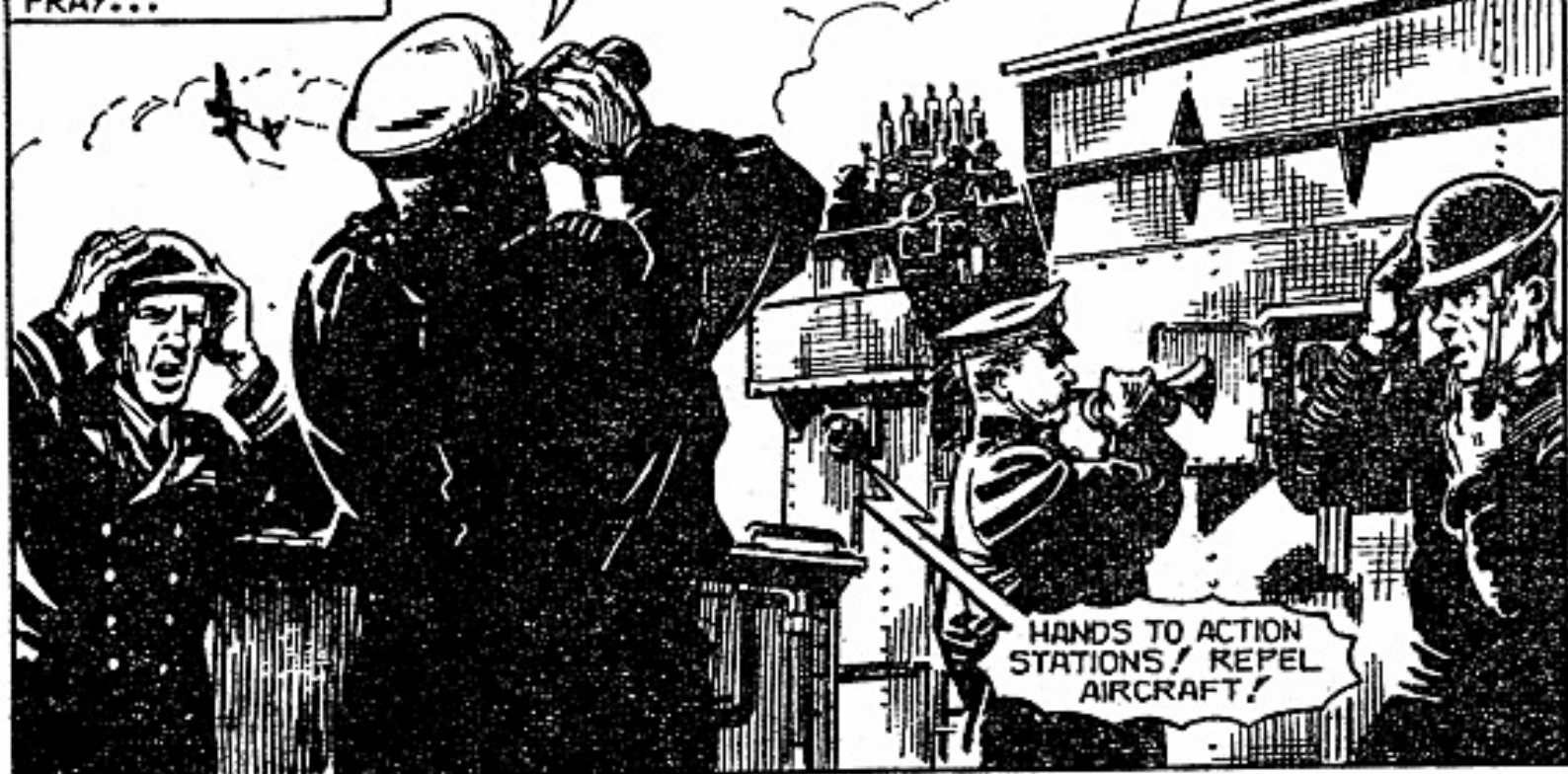
YES, HE'S ALL RIGHT,
IS THE SKIPPER! THIS ISN'T
THE FIRST TIME HE'S LET US
OFF LIGHTLY.

BUT GIBRALTAR WAS ONLY A BREATHER
BETWEEN ROUNDS. THE CONVOY BEGAN
THE SECOND LEG OF ITS JOURNEY AND
ONCE CLEAR OF THE STRAITS OF
GIBRALTAR, THE NAZI VULTURES
SWOOPED AGAIN...

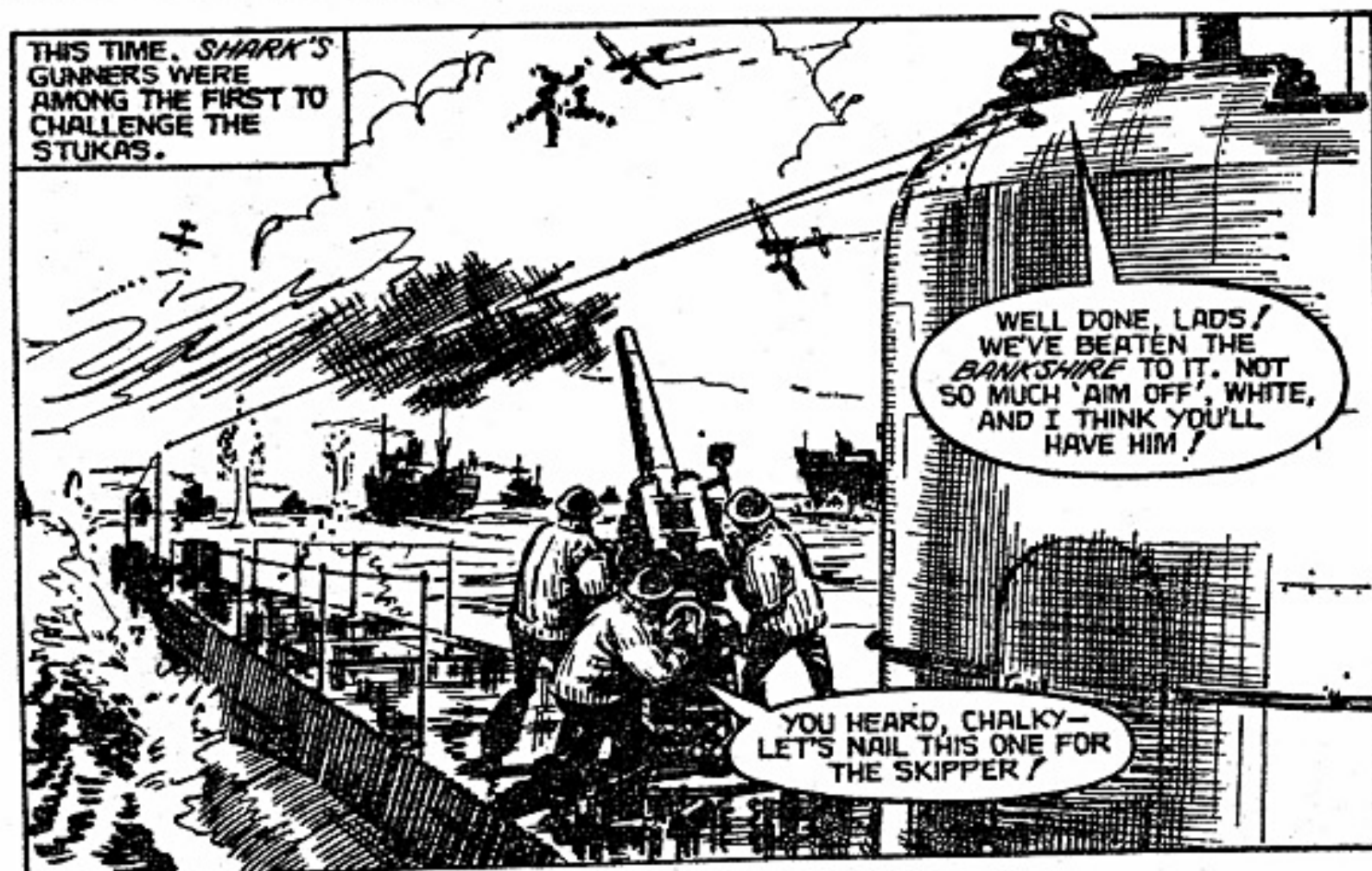
ACHTUNG,
ACHTUNG! WE WILL
ATTACK IN FLIGHTS,
RED ONE LEADING,
TEN SECONDS
INTERVAL...

ON EVERY SHIP, FROM THE POWERFUL CRUISER TO THE SMALLEST MERCHANTMAN, GUN CREWS NERVED THEMSELVES FOR THE FRAY...

HERE THEY COME AGAIN! THE BLIGHTERS HAVEN'T WASTED MUCH TIME!



THIS TIME, *SHARK'S* GUNNERS WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO CHALLENGE THE STUKAS.



SALVO AFTER SALVO THEY HURLED AT THE ATTACKING PLANES. AT LAST *SHARK* COULD SAY THAT SHE WAS EARNING HER KEEP! THREE MORE ROUNDS—AND THEN A HIT!



THE SUBMARINE'S GUN CREW WENT WILD WITH TRIUMPH...



GOT 'IM!

NOW THOSE *BANKSHIRE* BOYS OWE US A DRINK!

DURING THE LONG HOURS OF DAYLIGHT, THE DIVE-BOMBING HARASSED THE CONVOY CONTINUALLY AND ONLY DARKNESS BROUGHT ANY RESPITE.

SECURE FROM ACTION STATIONS, LADS—JERRY'S GONE HOME FOR THE NIGHT! WELL DONE, I'M PROUD OF YOU ALL! GET WHAT SLEEP YOU CAN NOW.



WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME REST, SIR? I'LL TAKE THE FIRST WATCH.

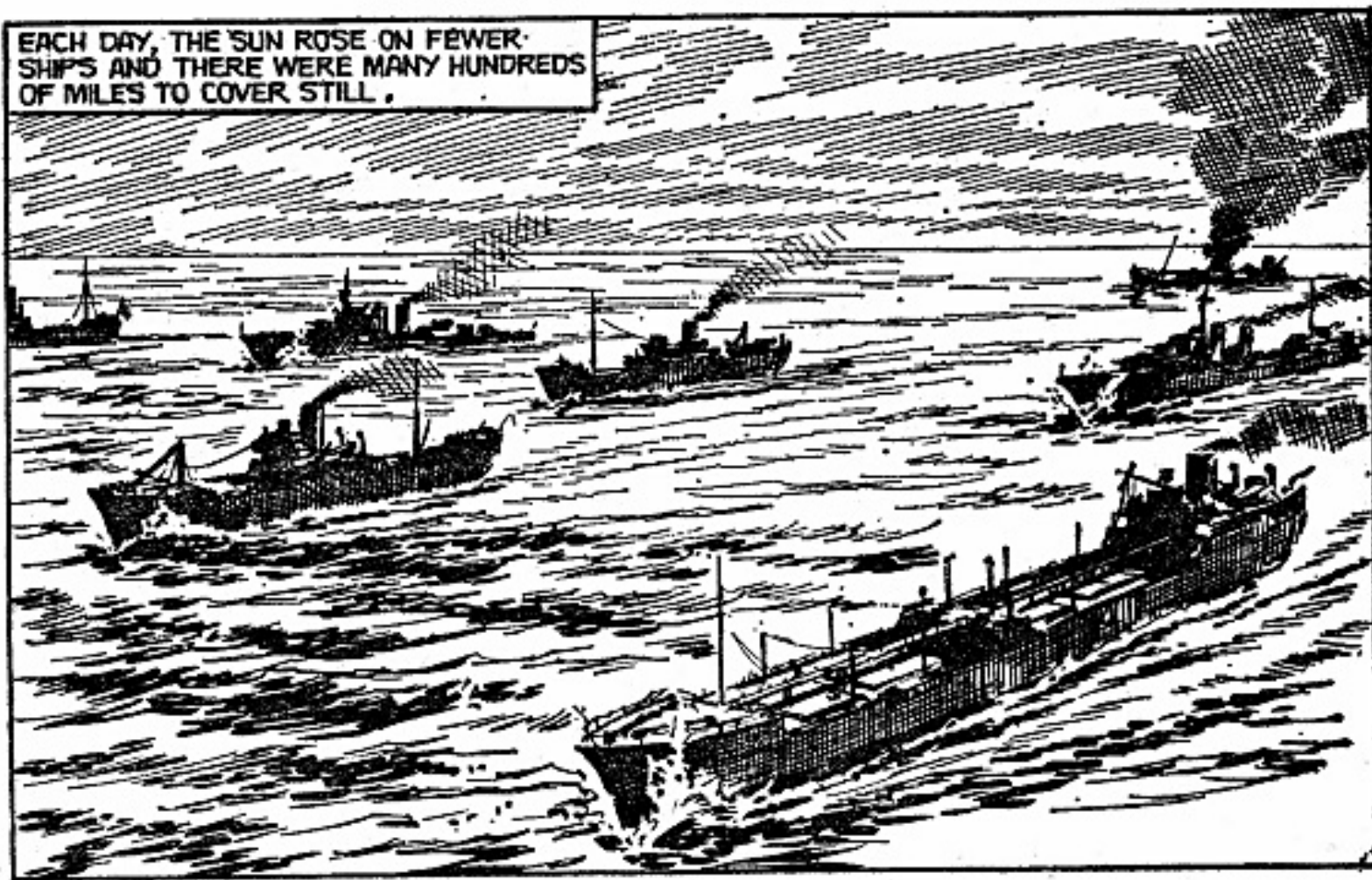
WITH THE FIRST GLIMMER OF DAWN, THOUGH, THE ENEMY RETURNED TO THE ASSAULT.

AIRCRAFT BEARING GREEN FOUR-FIVE—ANGLE OF SIGHT, THREE-O-7

CAN YOU SEE THEM, NAV? MY EYES ARE NOT USED TO THE LIGHT YET.

I SHOULD SAY SO, SKIPPER! THERE'S ABOUT HALF THE GERMAN AIR FORCE OUT THERE!

EACH DAY, THE SUN ROSE ON FEWER SHIPS AND THERE WERE MANY HUNDREDS OF MILES TO COVER STILL,



THEN, ONE MORNING ...

I DON'T LIKE IT, NAV!
HALFWAY THROUGH THE FORENOON
WATCH AND NO SIGN OF A JERRY
PLANE. OUR LITTLE PLAYMATES
ARE UP TO SOMETHING, I'LL BE
BOUND. WISH I KNEW WHAT
THEY WERE DOING...

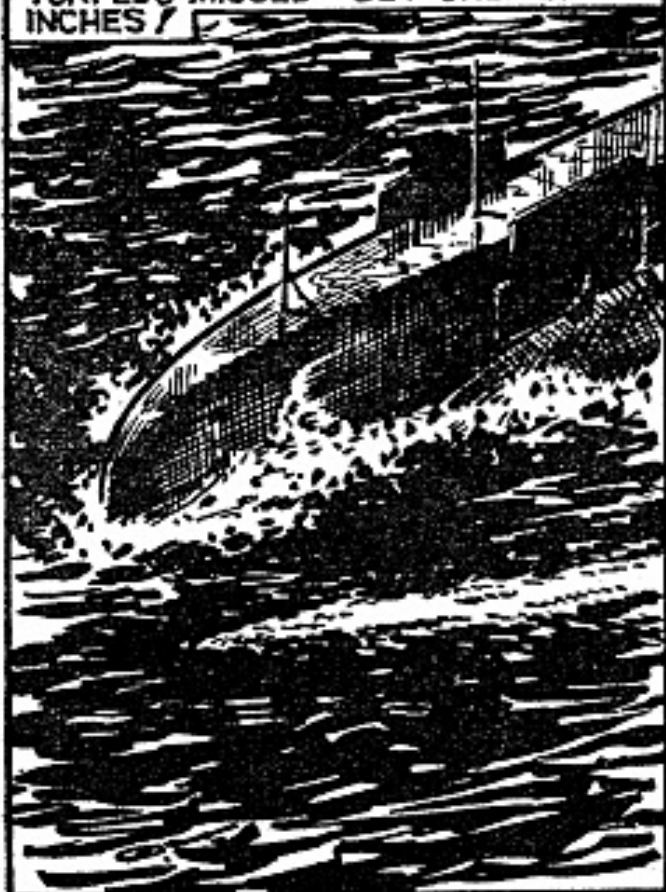
SUFFERING SNAKES!
TORPEDO TRACK TO PORT!
WE'RE BEING ATTACKED BY
U-BOATS!

A FAST MOVING, WHITE STREAK OF
FOAM WAS THE ONLY VISIBLE SIGN
OF THE DEADLY UNDERSEA MISSILE.

EMERGENCY
HARD-A-STARBOARD!
TORPEDO RUNNING PORT SIDE.
ALL HANDS, HANG ON!

COME ON,
CHIEFY—BRING
HER ROUND!

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GRIMSHAW DID NOT FAIL HIS SKIPPER. THE GERMAN TORPEDO MISSED—BUT ONLY BY INCHES!



ON HER NEW COURSE, THE SUBMARINE GRADUALLY ROLLED BACK ON AN EVEN KEEL.



Y'KNOW, NAV., I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT THIS OLD RATTLE-TRAP IS LUCKY. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT SINCE WE LEFT SCOTLAND—AND STILL NO CASUALTIES!

BUT HE WAS IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT BACK TO THE BATTLE, AS A TANKER AHEAD STOPPED A GERMAN TORPEDO.

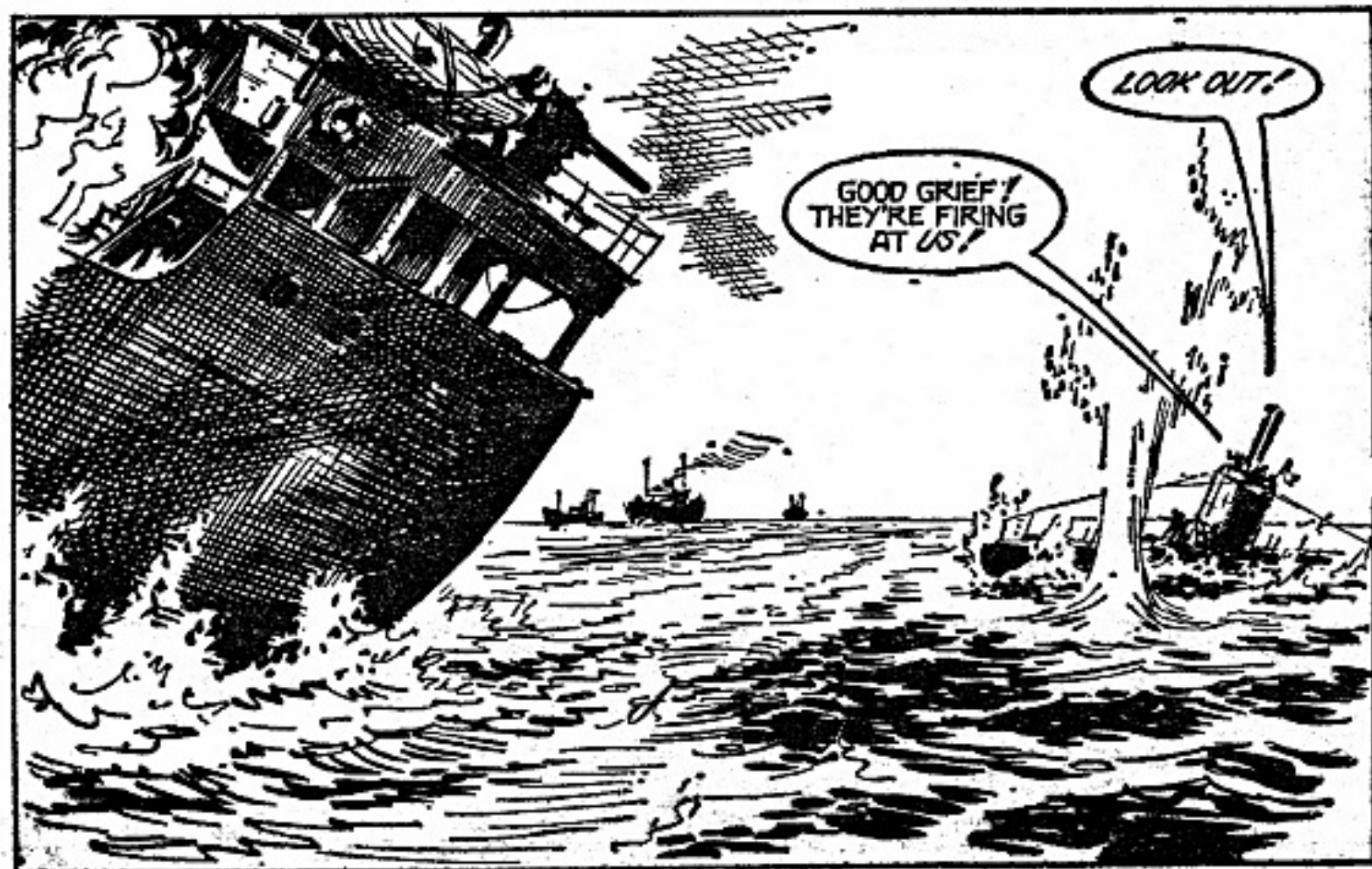
POOR DEVILS! SHE'S ANOTHER WE'LL BE LEAVING BEHIND, I RECKON. BETTER GO ALONGSIDE HER; NAV—THERE MAY BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO.



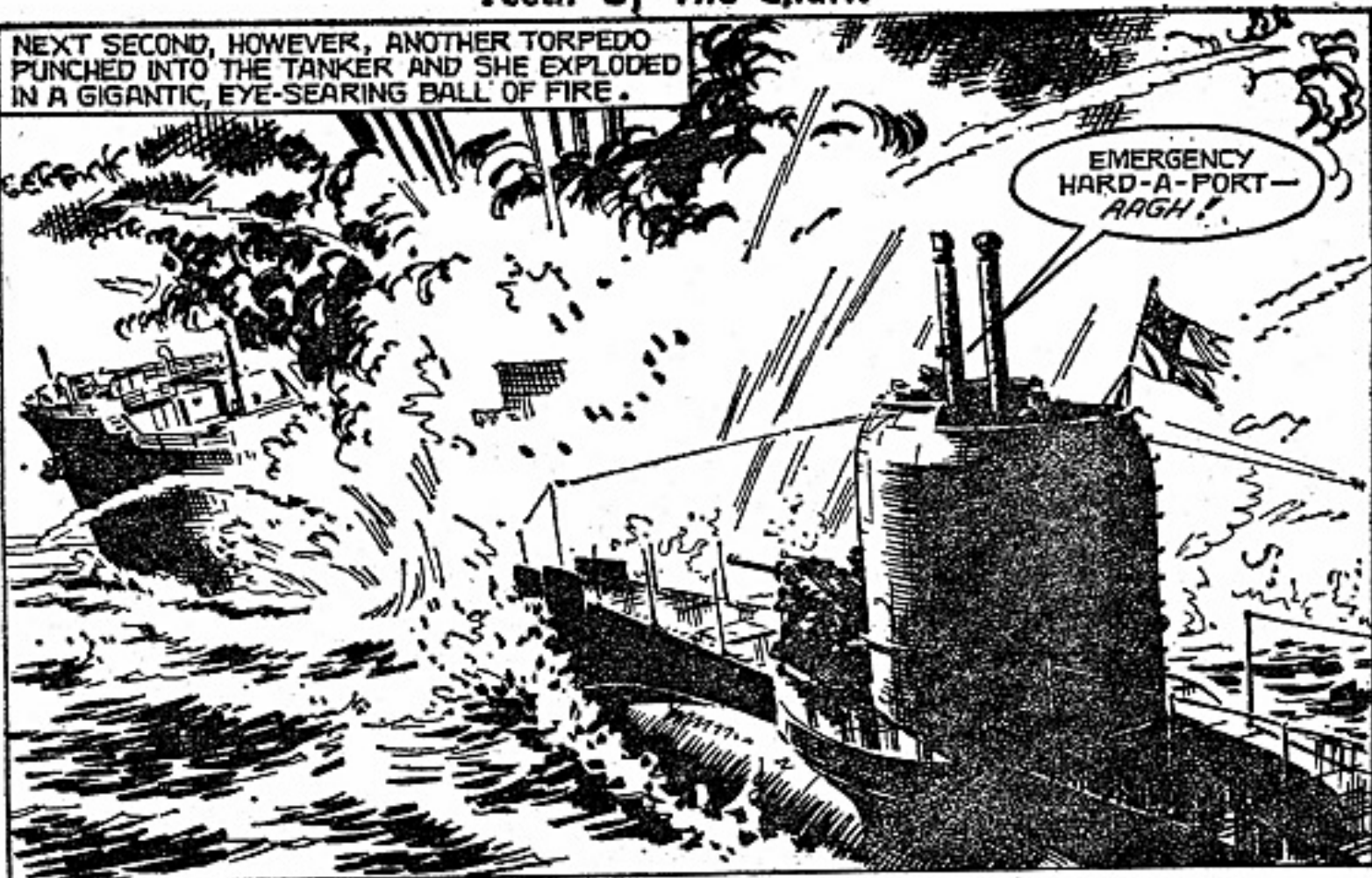
AYE AYE, SKIPPER!

Teeth Of The Shark

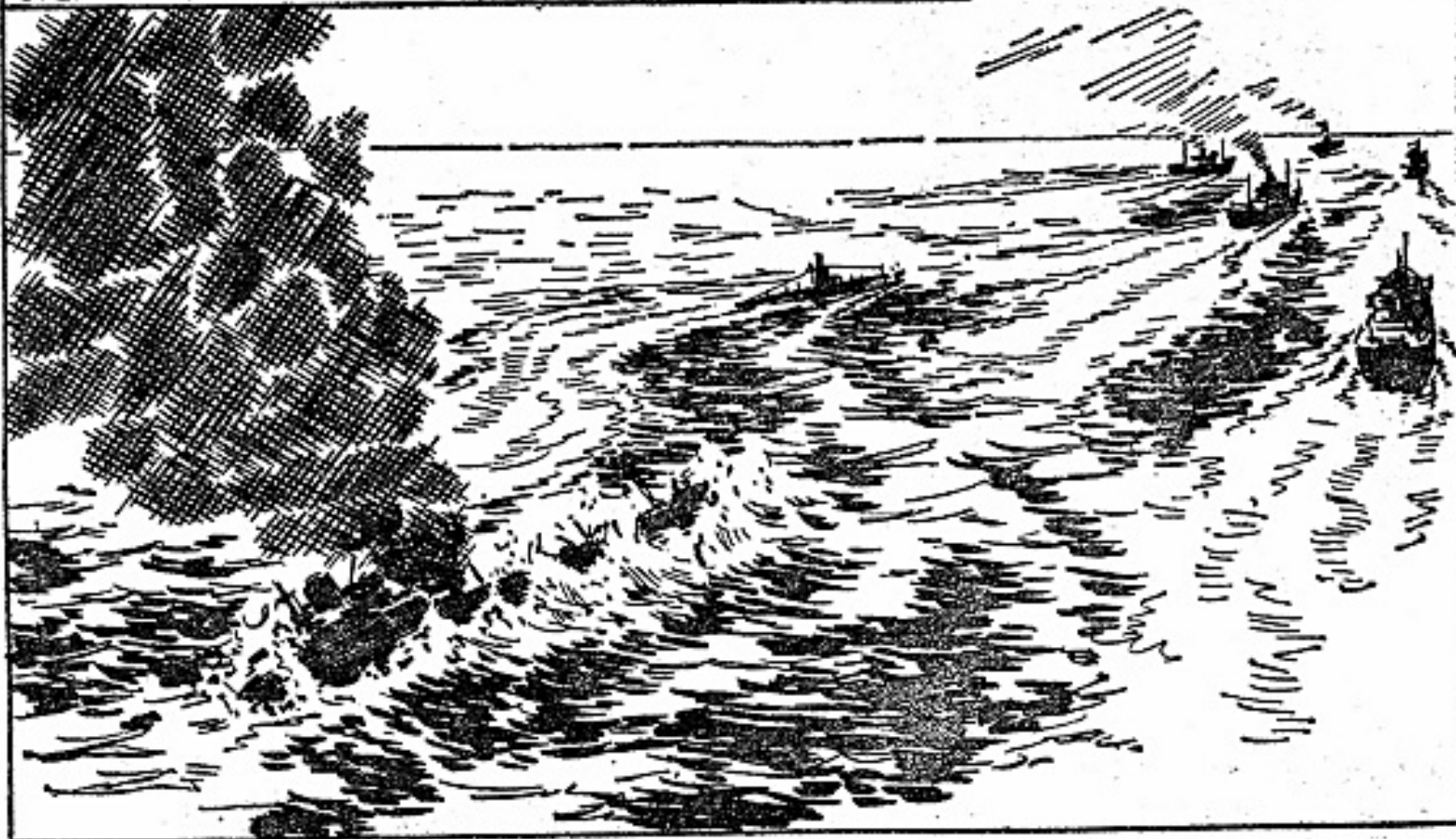
AS *SHARK* DREW SLOWLY UP TO THE CRIPPLED TANKER, A MERCHANT SEAMAN, STILL DAZED BY THE SHOCK OF THE EXPLOSION, MISTOOK HER FOR A GERMAN U-BOAT AND STUMBLED OVER TO THE TANKER'S AFTER GUN...




NEXT SECOND, HOWEVER, ANOTHER TORPEDO PUNCHED INTO THE TANKER AND SHE EXPLODED IN A GIGANTIC, EYE-SEARING BALL OF FIRE.



NO-ONE COULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT TERRIBLE HOLOCAUST AND AS THE SUBMARINE SHEERED AWAY, THE TANKER TURNED OVER ON TO HER SIDE AND SLID BENEATH THE WAVES.




MEANWHILE, ABOARD THE FLAGSHIP,
THE ADMIRAL PONDERED A MUCH
DEEPER PROBLEM.



THE GERMAN
BATTLESHIP, *BLUCHER*, IS
OUT! WITH ANY LUCK, WE
MAY BE ABLE TO INTERCEPT HER!
BUT WE'LL HAVE TO USE EVERY
AVAILABLE BRITISH SHIP —
AND THAT MEANS LEAVING
THE CONVOY TO FEND
FOR ITSELF!

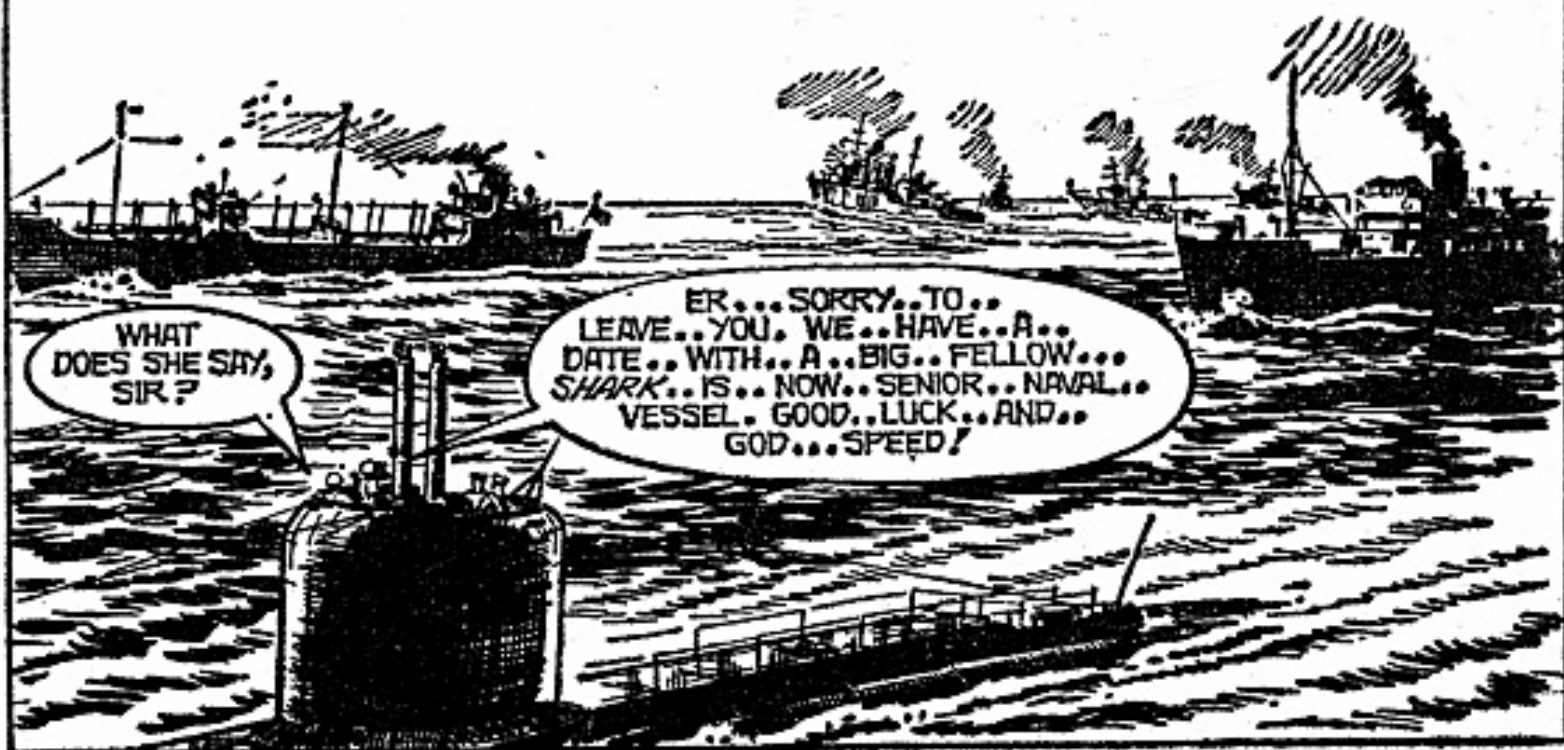
IT WOULD BE
A MOMENTOUS
GAMBLE...



HOWEVER, I'M SURE
YOU WILL AGREE THAT WITH
SO MUCH AT STAKE, GENTLEMEN,
WE REALLY HAVE NO CHOICE IN
THE MATTER. THE ESCORT WILL
BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY
AND WILL SAIL TO MEET
THE *BLUCHER*!

Chapter 3. *Lone Escort*

SO SHARK, WITH ONE 3.7 INCH GUN,
WAS LEFT TO GUARD THE CONVOY...



TOM CONSULTED HIS NAVIGATOR...



TWO AND A HALF DAYS BEFORE THEY COULD RELAX THEIR GUARD! TOM DECIDED TO POSITION *SHARK* IN THE CENTRE OF THE CONVOY, THAT WAY, THEY WOULD STAND AN EQUAL CHANCE OF MEETING ATTACK FROM ANY QUARTER...

RIGHT! NOW THAT WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE WE'D BETTER BREAK *ANOTHER* RULE AND BUNCH THEM UP TIGHTLY. WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE ANY STRAGGLERS. BRING 'EM IN CLOSER, SIGNALMAN.

AYE AYE, SIR.

BELOW DECKS, CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GRIMSHAW SENSED THE EXTREME GRAVITY OF THEIR SITUATION — AND KNEW THAT HIS WORST ORDEAL WAS PROBABLY TO COME.



I-I'VE NEVER KNOWN A TOUGHER SPOT THAN THIS ONE! I ONLY HOPE I DON'T LET THE SKIPPER DOWN!

DARKNESS APPROACHED AND WITH THE COMING OF NIGHT, THE MEN OF CONVOY P.Z. 81 BEGAN TO FEEL SAFER. BUT, THIS TIME, THE INKY BLACKNESS HELD NEW TERRORS FOR THEM.




SUDDENLY, THE BLOW FELL...

JUPITER!
SHE'S BEEN
KIPPERED!

A black and white comic panel showing a man in a small boat on the left, looking towards a large ship on the right. The large ship is sinking, with smoke and debris rising from it. The background shows a tropical coastline with palm trees. The man's speech bubble says "JUPITER! SHE'S BEEN KIPPERED!".

THIS TIME THE CRY WAS "E-BOATS!" A FLOTILLA OF THE FAST, DEADLY SURFACE VESSELS HAD FOUND THE SLUGGISH MERCHANTMEN.

THEY HAVE NO ESCORTS!
WE WILL CUT THEM TO RIBBONS.
STAND BY TO ATTACK AGAIN!

A black and white comic panel showing a large fleet of E-boats (submarine chasers) attacking a group of merchant ships. The E-boats are in the foreground, moving towards the merchant ships. One merchant ship is on fire and sinking. The background shows a tropical coastline with palm trees. A speech bubble from one of the E-boats says "THEY HAVE NO ESCORTS! WE WILL CUT THEM TO RIBBONS. STAND BY TO ATTACK AGAIN!".

THE LOW SILHOUETTE OF THE SUBMARINE HAD ESCAPED THE E-BOATS' NOTICE.

THEY'VE NOT SPOTTED US YET! WE MAY STILL BE ABLE TO HIT THEM WHERE IT HURTS! FULL AHEAD, BOTH ENGINES. GUN CREW, CLOSE UP!



THE LEADING E-BOAT IN ITS SIGHTS, SHARK'S SOLITARY GUN WENT INTO ACTION — WITH DEADLY ACCURATE EFFECT.



AS THE E-BOAT LEADER SLID BENEATH THE WAVES, THE REST OF THE PACK TURNED TOWARDS THE SHARK. TOM REACTED SWIFTLY...



THE SUBMARINE SLID BENEATH THE SURFACE AND TOM EXPLAINED TO HIS CREW WHAT HE HAD IN MIND.



THOSE E-BOATS CAN RUN RINGS AROUND US — ON THE SURFACE! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO GET BEHIND THEM, SURFACE, AND THEN NAIL THEM WITH THE FORWARD GUN.

THE ONE OBJECT WAS TO GAIN TIME FOR THE CONVOY — TIME AND DISTANCE. FOR EVERY SECOND, EVERY TURN OF THEIR SCREWS, BROUGHT THE MERCHANT SHIPS NEARER TO MALTA.

I DON'T CARE IF THE OLD HOOKER BLOWS SKY-HIGH AND YOU GO UP ON TOP OF YOUR PRECIOUS BOILERS, CHIEF — I *MUST* HAVE MORE STEAM! THE LADS ON THAT SUB, WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP THE JERRIES OFF OUR NECKS FOR EVER.



OKAY, I'LL INCREASE THE PRESSURE! HAVE YOU MADE OUT YOUR WILL?

IN THE CONTROL ROOM OF THE SUBMARINE, ALL THE CREW HAD NERVED THEMSELVES FOR THE INTRICATE MANOEUVRING.

INTERCEPTION COURSE
O-TWO-O, COX'N.

GOOD HEAVENS!
OLD GRIMSHAW IS ACTUALLY
SMILING! I DO BELIEVE THE
OLD FOX IS ENJOYING
THIS!

STEER
O-TWO-O,
SIR.

IT WAS A DARING PLAN, NEEDING
SPLIT-SECOND REACTION AND TIMING.

STEADY,
CHIEF, STEADY.
RIGHT-SURFACE!

WITH A HISS OF ESCAPING AIR, THE SUBMARINE BROKE SURFACE. SHE WAS HARDLY OUT OF THE WATER WHEN HER GUN CREW WERE RACING ALONG THE STEEL DECK.

THAT'S IT, LADS! CATCH 'EM BEFORE THEY SPOT US!

THE GUN CREW HAD NEVER WORKED SO FAST. THE SHELL WAS IN AND THE BREECH CLOSED IN RECORD TIME. THEN ...

FIRE!

THE TRAILING E-BOAT CAUGHT THE SUBMARINE'S FIRST ROUND DEAD AMIDSHIPS. WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING ROAR HER TORPEDOES EXPLODED...




THE GUN CREW WERE JUBILANT AT THEIR SECOND SUCCESS — BUT ALREADY THEY HAD A FRESH TARGET IN THEIR SIGHTS ...



THE GUN SWUNG MENACINGLY TOWARDS THE ADVANCING ENEMY AND FROM THE CONNING TOWER THE LEWIS GUNS JOINED IN THE AWFUL CHORUS.

THAT'S RIGHT, GUNNERS — GIVE THEM A PASTING!

A large naval ship is shown from a side-on perspective, firing a massive gun. A huge splash of water is visible from the impact of the shot. The ship's conning tower and other structures are visible. The sea is choppy with waves.

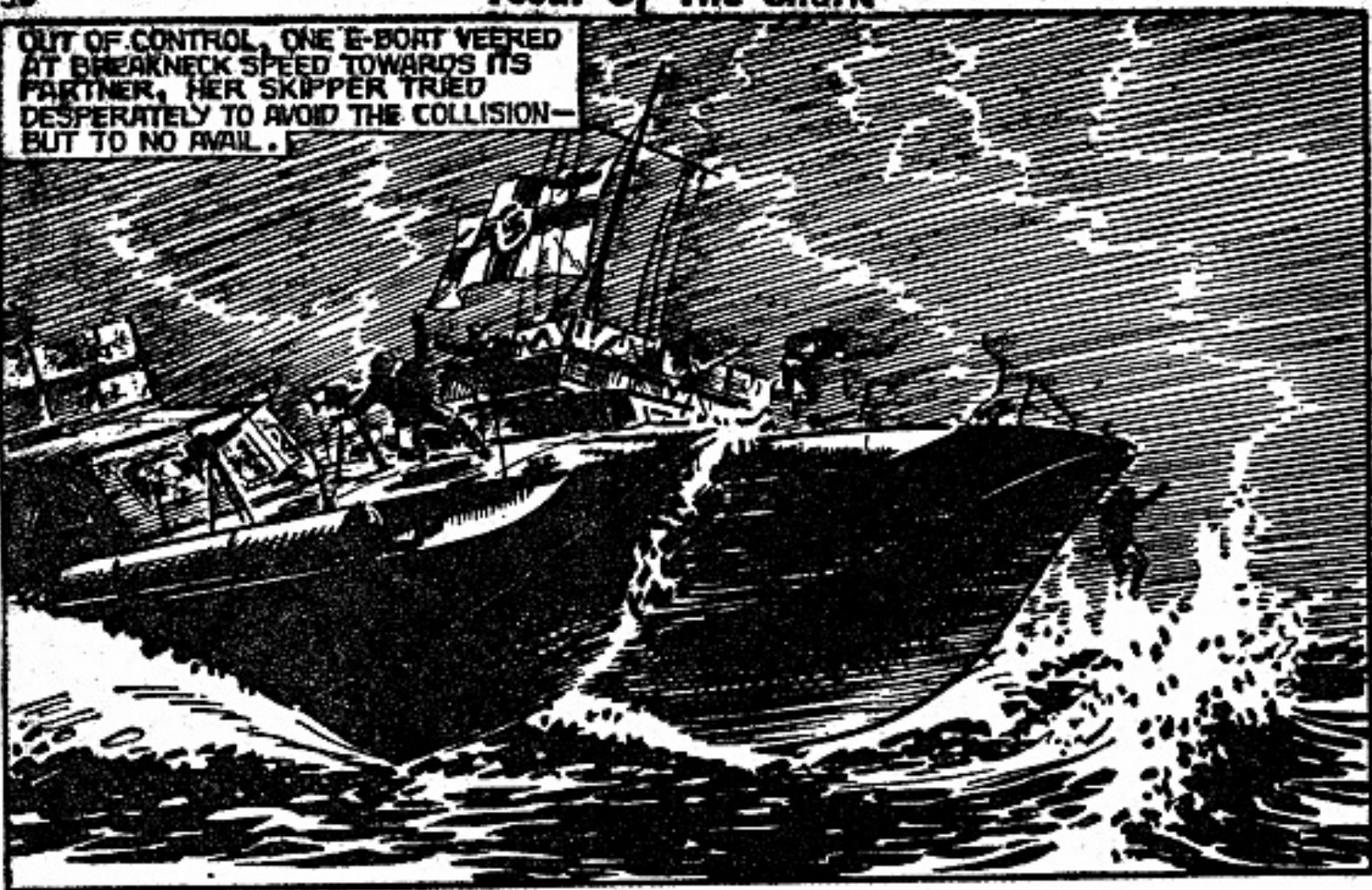
WITH DEVASTATING ACCURACY, THE FIRE FROM THE LEWIS GUN SWEEPED ALONG THE DECK OF THE LEADING E-BOAT SHATTERING THE WHEEL-HOUSE.

TEUFEL!
WE ARE OUT OF CONTROL!

A close-up view from inside a conning tower. A sailor in a dark uniform and cap is looking out through a window. Outside, a large ship is being hit by a massive explosion, with a large plume of smoke and fire. The sailor's expression is one of shock or alarm. The interior of the conning tower shows various control panels and instruments.

Teeth Of The Shark

OUT OF CONTROL, ONE E-BORT VEERED AT BREAKNECK SPEED TOWARDS ITS PARTNER. HER SKIPPER TRIED DESPERATELY TO AVOID THE COLLISION— BUT TO NO AVAIL.



THE CATASTROPHIC ROUT OF THE REST OF HIS PACK DETERRED THE REMAINING NAZI CAPTAIN FROM PRESSING HOME HIS ATTACK.

HE'S HAD ENOUGH!
WE'VE BEATEN THEM OFF,
BY THUNDER!



BUT AS THE LAST GERMAN BOAT HIGH-TAILED IT FOR HOME, TOM RUEFULLY SURVEYED THE DAMAGE THEY HAD DONE.

DO YOU RECKON IT'S ALL OVER NOW, SKIPPER?

I HOPE SO, NAV— I REALLY HOPE SO! FOR ONE THING, WE CAN'T DIVE ANYMORE. LOOK AT THAT LOT...

AND TO ADD EMPHASIS TO TOM STOREY'S WORDS THERE WAS AN URGENT SHOUT FROM THE HATCHWAY...

SIR! THE FORWARD COMPARTMENT'S FLOODING BADLY!

TOM AND REGGIE RUSHED DOWN THE LADDER HARDLY TOUCHING THE RUNGS IN THEIR HASTE.

ARE THERE ANY MEN IN THERE, CHIEF?

CAN'T BE SURE, SIR. WE HAD NO TIME TO CHECK BEFORE WE SEALED IT OFF.

HURRIEDLY MAKING THEIR WAY FORWARD, TOM REALISED JUST HOW MUCH OF A BATTERING SHARK HAD TAKEN.

SHE CERTAINLY
TOOK MORE OF A
BASHING THAN WE
REALISED UP TOP,
CHIEF!

AYE, SIR,
IT'S A WONDER
SHE'S STILL AFLOAT,
IF YOU ASK ME.

JUST BEFORE THEY REACHED THE FORWARD
COMPARTMENT THEY WERE MET BY AN
ANXIOUS CREWMAN.

IT'S PEARSON,
SIR—HE'S BEEN SHUT
IN! PERMISSION TO
OPEN HER UP,
SIR!

TOM COULD NOT BE SURE HOW MUCH WATER WAS BUILT UP BEHIND THE BULKHEAD, BUT HE COULD NOT LEAVE A MAN IN THERE TO DROWN.


RIGHT, REGGIE—I'LL OPEN HER UP! IF IT'S NOT TOO BAD IN THERE, I'M GOING IN. YOU SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND ME.

AYE-AYE, SKIPPER!

THE MOMENT THE COMMUNICATING DOOR WAS UNBARRED, A WAIST-HIGH WALL OF WATER HIT TOM, BUT BEFORE IT COULD SWEEP HIM OFF HIS FEET, HE WAS THROUGH THE ENTRANCE.




THE DOOR SLAMMED BEHIND HIM WITH A DULL CRASH. WATER SWIRLING ABOUT HIM, TOM WADED TOWARDS THE SEAMAN, WHO WAS OBVIOUSLY INJURED.



HELLO, PEARSON—
I'VE COME TO GET
YOU OUT. WHAT'S
THE DAMAGE?


IT'S MY ARM, SIR.
I THINK IT'S BROKEN!

TOM HELPED THE INJURED MAN TOWARDS THE DOOR AND HAMMERED ON IT WITH HIS FIST.




ALL RIGHT, REGGIE!
I'VE GOT HIM!
OPEN UP!

THE TWO MEN WERE ALMOST THROWN BODILY THROUGH THE DOOR AS IT OPENED. WILLING HANDS GRABBED THEM.



OKAY,
SKIPPER, WE'VE
GOT HIM!

WITH THE INJURED SAILOR SAFELY IN THE SICK BAY, TOM AND REGGIE MOVED ON DECK AGAIN. IN THE EARLY LIGHT OF DAWN THE CONVOY WAS STEAMING ON AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.



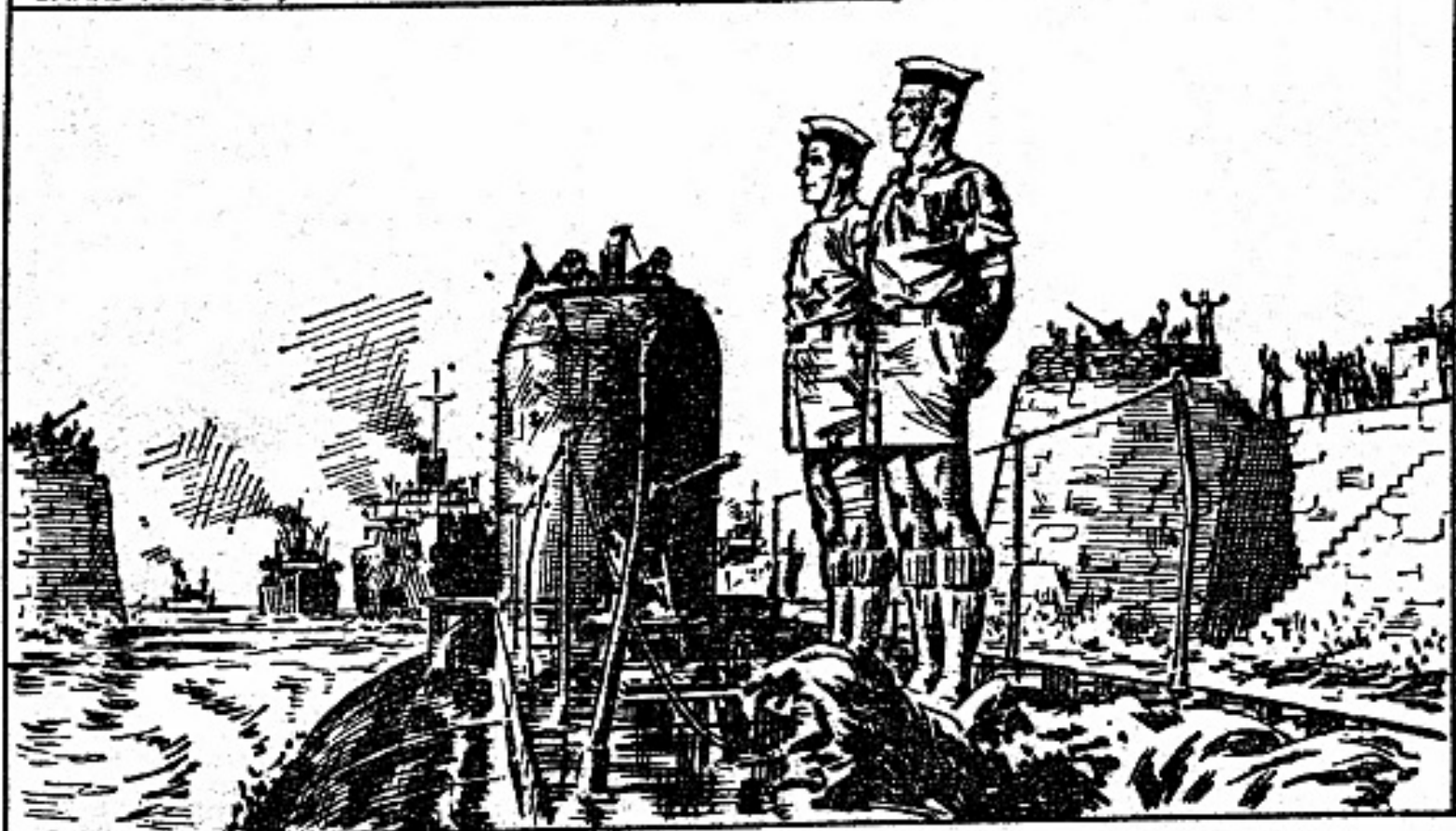
NOT BAD, EH,
REGGIE? IT LOOKS
AS THOUGH JERRY
ONLY SANK ONE
OF OUR CHARGES.

VERY NEARLY TWO,
SKIPPER! IF THAT LEAK IN
THE FORWARD COMPARTMENT
WAS ANY WORSE WE'D BE
AT THE BOTTOM, TOO!

A SUDDEN ROAR MADE BOTH MEN LOOK UP. THREE HURRICANES FLASHED OVERHEAD. THE MALTA-BASED FIGHTERS HAD COME TO SAFEGUARD WHAT WAS LEFT OF THEIR PRECIOUS SUPPLIES!



LATER, WITH A PROUD BUT BATTERED *SHARK* IN THE LEAD, THE GALLANT SURVIVORS OF CONVOY P.Z. 81 LIMPED INTO GRAND HARBOUR, MALTA.

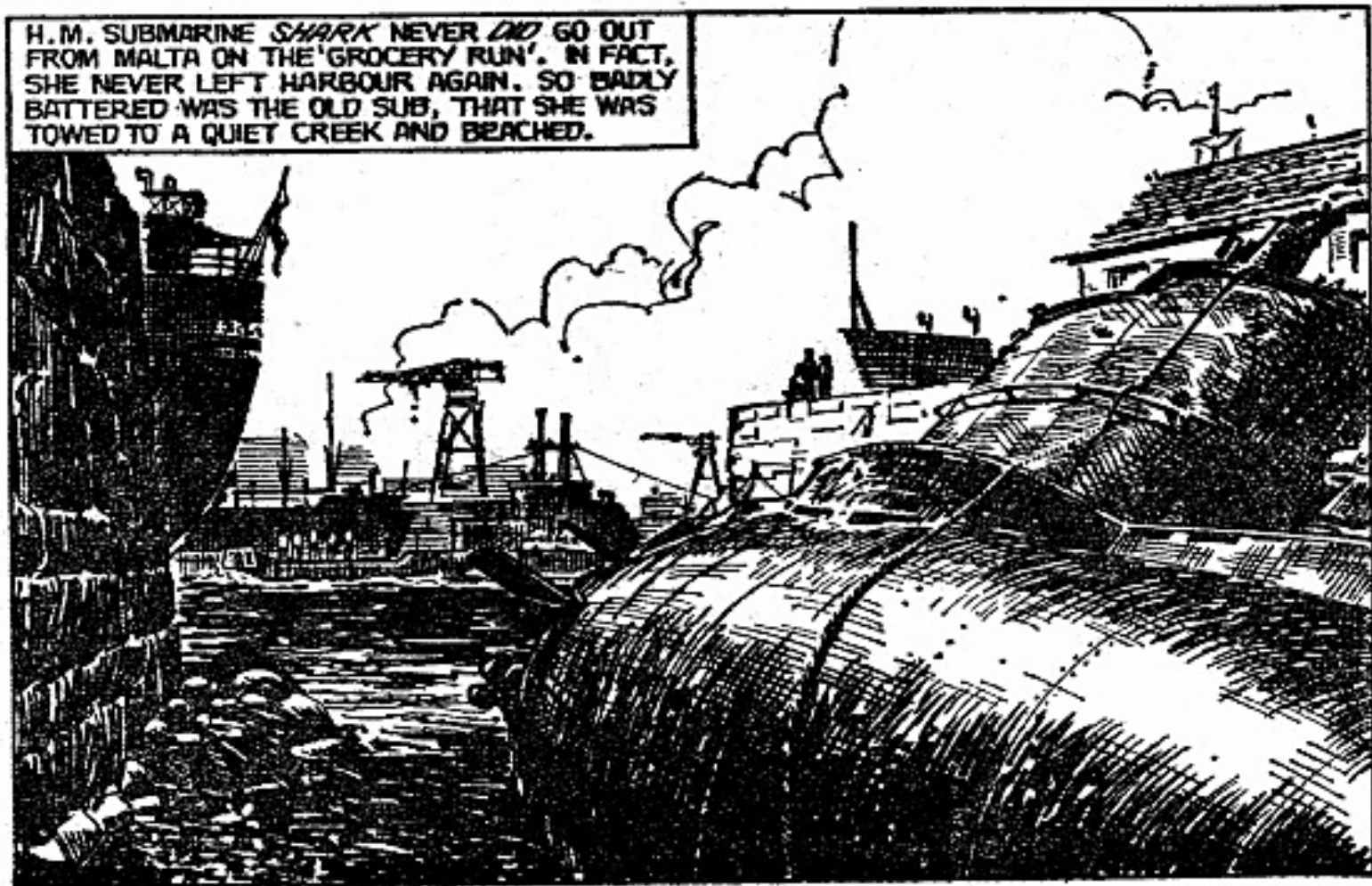


THAT NIGHT, DESPITE THE GENEROUS INVITATIONS OF THE GRATEFUL MALTA-BASED TROOPS WHO HAD HEARD THE FULL STORY OF THEIR EXPLOITS, *SHARK'S* CREW HELD A SMALL PARTY OF THEIR OWN.

GENTLEMEN—I AM PROUD TO 'AVE YOU IN MY LITTLE BAR / FOR THE SO BRAVE SAILORS OF *H.M.S. SHARK*. TONI OFFERS EVERYTHING ON THE 'OUSE... NOT THAT THERE IS MUCH LEFT TO GIVE!

THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU...ER...TONI. BUT, FIRST, WOULD YOU JUST LET US HAVE SOME GLASSES? WE'D LIKE TO DRINK THE HEALTH OF A FEW FRIENDS WHO ARE UNABLE TO BE WITH US TO-NIGHT.

H.M. SUBMARINE *SHARK* NEVER *DO* GO OUT FROM MALTA ON THE 'GROCERY RUN'. IN FACT, SHE NEVER LEFT HARBOUR AGAIN. SO BADLY BATTERED WAS THE OLD SUB, THAT SHE WAS TOWED TO A QUIET CREEK AND BEACHED.



LIEUTENANT TOM STOREY WAS GIVEN COMMAND OF A NEW, WELL-EQUIPPED SUBMARINE CALLED *UNBEATEN*—A VERY APT TITLE, FOR CHIEFY GRIMSHAW AND MOST OF *SHARK*'S OLD CREW WENT WITH HIM!

THERE'S THE OLD *SHARK*! NEVER BE ANOTHER LIKE HER, EH, REGGIE?

HEAR, HEAR, SIR!
I FEEL THAT SHE BRINGS US LUCK, SEEING HER AT THE START AND FINISH OF EVERY PATROL.

ME, TOO, SIR!

FAR FROM PUNISHING TOM STOREY, COMMANDER HENRY JACKSON SHARP HAD DONE HIM A GREAT FAVOUR BY PROVIDING HIM WITH A STEPPING-STONE TO A FIGHTING SUBMARINE AND A FIRST-CLASS CREW.

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